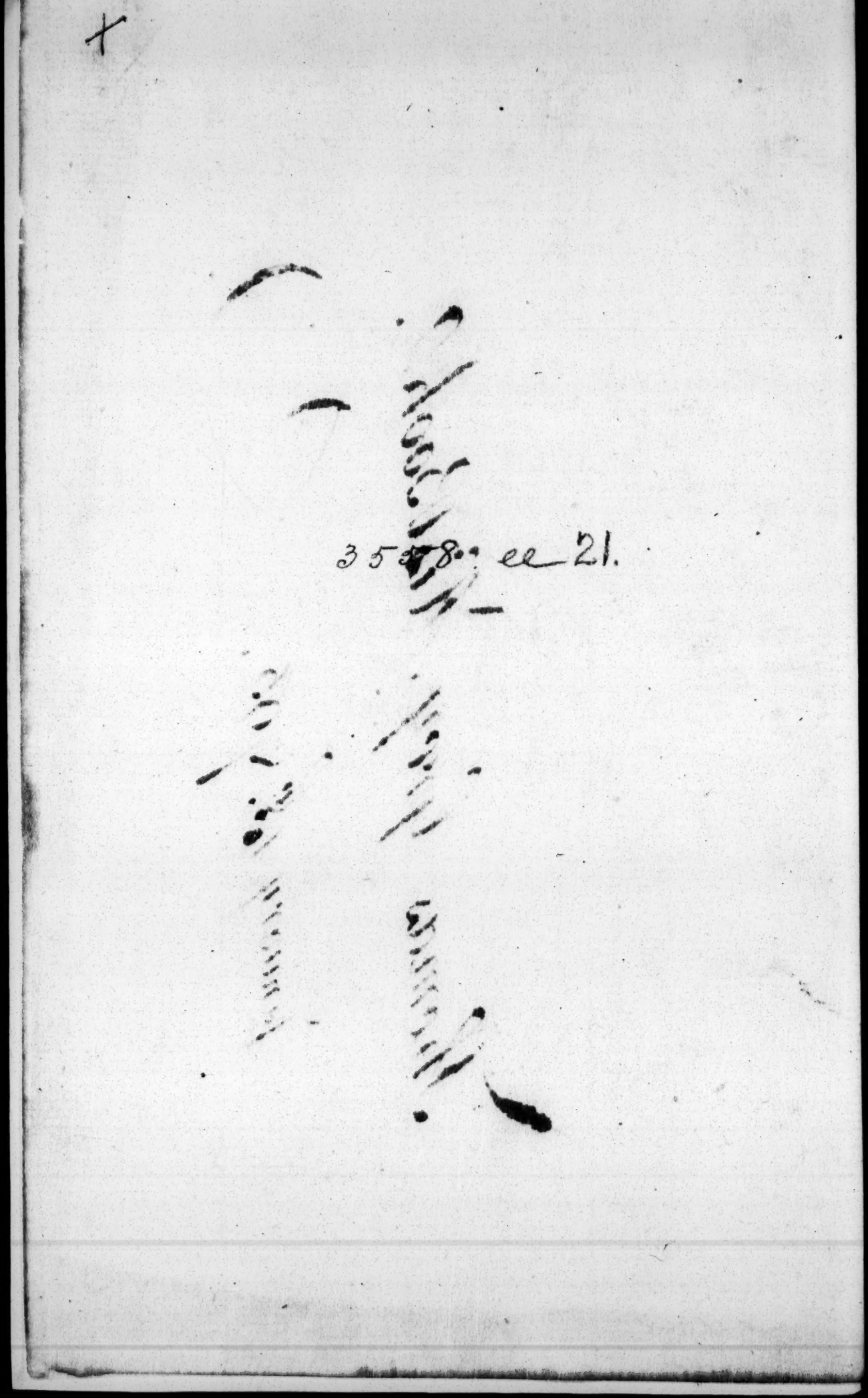
Thomas Grey. His Book.

January 1st. 1795.



A

COMPLETE BODY

OF

SPECULATIVE AND PRACTICAL

DIVINITY,

CONSISTING OF FIVE PARTS.

I. Of the being, nature, and attributes of God, and of the evidences of divine revelation.

II. Of the works of creation, and providence.

III. Of the most memorable transactions, from the beginning of the world, to the coming of Christ; with proper dissertations upon each.

IV. Of the mysteries of our most holy faith.

V. Of the great precepts of moral and evangelical righteousness.

THE WHOLE

Extracted from the best antient and modern writers, but chiefly from the works of such as have been reputed the most able Divines, and celebrated Preachers amongst us.

To which are added,

An Alphabetical INDEX of the PRINCIPAL MATTERS contained in the BOOK.

LIKEWISE

A TABLE of Texts of Scripture explained, and more especially referred to in this Work.

VOL. III.

BY THOMAS STACKHOUSE, A. M.
Vicar of BEENHAM, in BERKSHIRE.

DUMFRIES:
Printed by ROBERT JACKSON, and WILLIAM BOYD.
MDCCLXXVI.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

CONTENTS.

PART IV.

Of the Myſteries of our moſt Holy Faith.

Page.

CHAP. III. OF Chriſt's exaltation; and firſt, of his reſurrection 1
Sect. I. Of Chriſt's aſcenſion - - - 22
II. Of Chriſt's ſeſſion at God's right hand - 31
CHAP. IV. Our Jeſus the true Meſſiah - - - 36
V. Of Chriſt's commiſſion to his apoſtles - 90
VI. Of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghoſt - 140
VII. Of the ſtate of the ſoul after death, and reſurrection of the body - - - 169
Sect. I. Of the reſurrection of the dead - - 192
CHAP. VIII. Of a future Judgment, and an everlaſting ſtate of happineſs or miſery - - - 209
Sect. I. Of heaven - - - - 241
II. Of hell - - - - 253

PART V.

Of the great Precepts of Moral and Evangelical Righteouſneſs.

CHAP. I. Our duty towards God - - - 274
Sect. I. Of the internal duties we owe to God. And firſt, of love - - - - 277
Of delight in God - - - 283
Of fearing God - - - - 289
Of truſting in God - - - - 294
Submiſſion to God - - - - 300
Of inward purity - - - - 303
Of heavenly mindedneſs - - - - 308
II. Of external duties to God; and firſt, of prayer - 314
Of public and private prayer - - - 324
Of praiſe and thankſgiving - - - 329
CHAP. II. Our duty towards our neighbour; and firſt, of univerſal love and charity - - - 336
Of loving enemies - - - - 345
Sect. I. Of juſtice in general - - - - 353
II. Of relative juſtice; and firſt, between prince and ſubject - - - - - 359

Between

Between paſtor and people - - - 363
Between huſband and wife - - - - 366
Between maſter and ſervant - - - 372
Between friend and friend - - - - - 376
Between ſuperiors in rank, parts, riches, and beneficence, and their reſpective inferiors - 382
III. Of mercy in general - - - 388
IV. Of mercy to mens ſouls - - - 393
V. Of mercy to mens bodies - - - 400
CHAP. III. Our duty to ourſelves; and firſt, of the government of our thoughts - - - 410
Of religious meditation - - - - 416
Of humility - - - - 422
Sect. I. Of the government of our paſſions and affections - 428
Of meekneſs - - - - 434
Of contentment - - - - 439
II. Of the government of the tongue - - - 449
III. Of the government of the whole man - - - 462
Of mortification - - - - 466
Of ſelf-denial - - - - 470
Of regeneration - - - - 474
Of abſtaining from evil appearance - - 479
Of the deſire of righteouſneſs - - - 486

A COMPLETE

A COMPLETE BODY OF SPECULATIVE AND PRACTICAL DIVINITY.

PART IV.

CHAP. III.

Of CHRIST's Exaltation.

Christ's resurrection.

HITHERTO we have beheld our Mediator and Redeemer in the low eſtate of his humanity, through the ſeveral ſteps of his humiliation, home to the laſt and moſt abaſing inſtance of it, viz. the ſeparation of his ſoul and body by death, and the detention of one in the manſions of departed ſouls, and of the other in the grave. [a] His exaltation follows next; and that Sun of Righteouſneſs, which ſet in ſo much obſcurity, ariſes now with light and ſplendour: for the earth, being not able to detain his body, nor hell, his ſoul, they both, after a determinate time, are re-united, and conſtitute the ſame complete man and perſon that he was before. This I take to be the true notion of a proper reſurrection: and becauſe our Saviour's reſurrection is the great and fundamental article of the chriſtian religion, that, which himſelf appeals to, and that, whereon we lay the main ſtreſs of his divine miſſion and authority, it may not be improper,

I. To evince the truth and certainty of it by ſuch arguments, as the nature of the thing requires; and then,

II. To obſerve in what manner, and for what purpoſes it was effected.

The nature of its proof.

I. [b] Now, our Saviour's reſurrection, being a matter of fact, which happened ſo many hundred years ago, it cannot be ſuppoſed, either that the teſtimony of ſenſe, or ſtrict and proper

a King's Hiſtory. b Ditton on the Reſurrection of Chriſt.

demonſtration (as demonſtration is underſtood by logicians and mathematicians) ſhould be produced in confirmation of its truth. All that can be expected in this caſe is moral evidence, and moral evidence is what, upon the principles of reaſon, we are bound to aſſent to. For, ſince one great uſe of reaſon is to examine and aſſent to truth, when the arguments, or objections, which are for or againſt any moral truth, being both impartially weighed and conſidered, our reaſon does not only more powerfully perſuade us to the truth of the thing propoſed, than the objections can poſſibly diſſuade us from it, but alſo produces a kind of pleaſing tranquillity and ſatisfaction in our minds when we acquieſce in it, and, on the contrary, cannot diſſent from it without reluctancy, and oppoſing the univerſal opinion of mankind; if we ſhut our eyes againſt ſo clear a light, and refuſe our aſſent, becauſe the thing is not capable of a ſtrict demonſtration, we ſin againſt the law of reaſon in our minds, and endeavour to depoſe that ſovereign faculty which God has made a judge and ruler over us. Now, ſince a great part of moral evidence conſiſts in the teſtimony of others, there are ſome infallible rules, whereby we may be morally certain of the truth of all ſuch matters of facts, as are recommended to us by ſuch teſtimony; and theſe may be reduced to three:

The conditions of a proper teſtimony.

1. A SUFFICIENT number of credible witneſſes.

2. A MORAL aſſurance, that they could not have offered to impoſe a falſehood upon us, without being detected. And,

3. A TACIT, or expreſs acknowledgment of enemies, that they do teſtify the truth.

1. [c] WHEN therefore a great number of men, of unqueſtioned virtue and probity, unanimouſly agree to teſtify a thing to be true, which they ſaw with their own eyes; when they declare it in the moſt public and ſolemn manner, and appeal to God for the truth and veracity of what they ſay; when they aſſert things which are contrary to the prejudice of their education, and the known laws of worldly intereſt; when they expoſe themſelves to ſuch ſufferings, in ſupport of their teſtimony, as fleſh and blood would carefully avoid; and when the religion, which they endeavour to prove and recommend by it, expreſsly condemns all liars to everlaſting puniſhments in the world to come; it is evident, that ſuch a teſtimony is ſo circumſtantiated, as to give us a very good moral ſecurity of the truth of that action.

2. [d] WHEN a few deſpiſed and illiterate men ſet themſelves up as witneſſes of a ſurpriſing event, in oppoſition to a wiſe and powerful nation, and even a whole world of inquiſitive men; when the account, they give, is of ſo great importance to mankind, that their eternal happineſs or miſery are to depend upon their believing or denying the truth of it; when all the precautions, which human wiſdom or malice could deviſe, have been made

c Cotes's Sermons. d Cotes, ibid.

made uſe of to diſcover and find out the fraud, if any ſuch had been uſed, or, if true, to hinder the belief of it; but when, notwithſtanding all the oppoſition which the learning, and wiſdom, and power of this world could make againſt it, the fact was believed by the beſt and wiſeſt part of mankind then living, who, after the moſt diligent ſearch and inquiry, could find no flaw or defect in it; it is plain to a demonſtration, that the thing was ſo, as it is repreſented to be, and ſucceeding ages can have no manner of pretence for the leaſt doubt or ſcruple about it.

3. [e] ONCE more, when two parties of men ſtand in the higheſt degree of oppoſition to each other, and the one aſſerts and publiſhes a matter of fact, which is abſolutely deſtructive of the intereſt of the other; when the one openly and publicly accuſes the other of injuſtice, cruelty, and murder, naming the time, the place, the manner, and other circumſtances of its being committed; and the party accuſed does not as publicly refute the charge, or do ſomething in their own vindication, more material than bribing falſe witneſſes to ſtifle the ſtory, or threatning their accuſers, if they pretend to perſiſt in it; they then tacitly acknowledge the truth of what the accuſing party alledge againſt them; and ſo, by conſequence, give up the cauſe. And now to apply theſe obſervations to the teſtimony of the apoſtles concerning the reſurrection of our Saviour Chriſt.

Applied to the apoſtles.

1. THAT the apoſtles were men of truth and probity, void of ambition and ſelf-deſign, uniform in their teſtimony, and unable to deviſe an impoſture, is what we had occaſion to prove [f], when their characters and qualifications fell under conſideration before: and, [g] though the number of perſons, who are the witneſſes of a matter of fact, abſtracted from all other conſiderations, is not, of itſelf, abſolutely convincing and concluſive; yet it carries this perſuaſion along with it, that, though an impoſture may lie concealed for a while in a few hands, it is next to impoſſible, that it ſhould lie undiſcovered in a great many. Now, to what a number of witneſſes our Saviour appeared after his reſurrection, the apoſtle to the Corinthians has given us this enumeration: [h] I delivered unto you, firſt of all, ſays he, that which I alſo received, how that Chriſt died for our ſins, according to the ſcriptures, and that he was buried, and that he roſe again the third day, according to the ſcriptures; and that he was ſeen of Cephas [i], then of the twelve [k], after that, he was ſeen

A ſufficient number of witneſſes.

e Ditton on the Reſurrection of Chriſt f See Vol. I. page 64. g Ditton, ibid. h 1 Cor. xv. 3, &c. i St Paul takes no notice here of Chriſt's firſt appearance to the devout women who brought ſpices and ointments to the ſepulchre, Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women (as we have it in Luke xxiv. 10.) The reaſon of which ſeems to be this,—That theſe women, being not to be witneſſes of their Saviour's reſurrection to the world, but only to carry the firſt news of it to his apoſtles; this appearance, in conſideration of their piety and affection to him, was only for the private confirmation of their faith, and therefore not particularly taken notice of by St Paul among the public evidences of Chriſt's reſurrection. Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. III. k The college of apoſtles, becauſe their number was twelve by

ſeen of above five hundred [l] brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain at preſent: beſides this, he was ſeen of James [m], then of the apoſtles [n], and, laſt of all, he was ſeen of me [o], as of one born out of time.

Had proper opportunities.

HERE is a competent number of witneſſes; and that they had ſufficient means and opportunities to know, and to be informed of the truth of what they reported to the world, is undeniable. They converſed with him familiarly, though not perpetually, for forty days; they ate and drank with him; they ſaw him do many wondrous works, and received orders and inſtructions from him about the inſtitution and government of his church: they declare that, to convince them of the truth of his reſurrection, he ſhewed them his hands and his feet, and, to one, more incredulous than the reſt, he indulged the liberty of feeling the very prints that the nails had made in them; that he upbraided them with unbelief in not giving credence to a matter ſo well atteſted; ſhewed them the reaſons of his reſurrection, and expounded the ſcriptures to them concerning this very article, with

by our Saviour's inſtitution, are moſt frequently called The Twelve, though, at ſome meetings, ſome one, or more of them might chance to be abſent. By the miſcarriage of Judas, there was a ſhort interruption, from the time of our Saviour's Apprehenſion to his Aſcenſion, and then they are called The Eleven; and are called ſo [Mark xvi. 14.] though Thomas one of the Eleven was abſent. And indeed in this text of St Paul, both St Ambroſe, and the vulgar tranſlation, which certainly follows a very antient copy, inſtead of Twelve, render it Eleven. Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. III.

l This was the moſt ſolemn appearance of all, mentioned Matth. xxviii. 10. and John xxi. 1. But then there is this difficulty concerning the greatneſs of this number, viz. that, at our Saviour's aſcenſion from mount Olivet, the number of the names together was but an hundred and twenty, whereas, at this meeting, they are computed five hundred; and yet we can hardly conceive that any of the number who had ſeen him after his reſurrection had revolted from him. Now, for the clear ſolution of this, it is to be conſidered that the great meeting of five hundred was in Galilee, the place of our Saviour's reſidence, and moſt conſtant preaching, and where, very probably, the number of his diſciples was greateſt; for which reaſon he might appoint that place for their general meeting: after which the apoſtles, who went thither by our Lord's appointment, together with others who accompanied them from Jeruſalem, returned back, but his followers, who lived in Galilee, remained there. So that there might very well be five hundred at the meeting in Galilee, and but an hundred and twenty at Jeruſalem. Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. III.

m This particular appearance to St James, the brother of our Lord, is no where mentioned in the evangeliſts. St Paul probably had it from the common tradition, mentioned by St Jerom, out of the Hebrew goſpel of the Nazarenes, in which are ſeveral paſſages omitted by St Matthew; and this for one, "That our Lord, immediately after he had riſen, went and appeared to "James: for James had vowed, that hour that he drank of the cup of the "Lord, (viz. in the ſacrament) he would not eat bread until he ſaw him riſen "from the dead. The Lord, when he appeared to him, ſaid, Bring hither "bread and a table, and he took the bread and bleſſed it, and brake it, and "gave it to James the Juſt, and ſaid to him, My brother, eat thy bread; for "the Son of man is riſen from among them that ſleep."

n *i. e.* By Thomas, as well as the reſt, as this was the ſecond appearance to the apoſtles together, whereof St Luke gives us an account, Chap. xxiv. 5. and St John, Chap. xx. 19. o This he ſpeaks of our Lord's appearance to him in his way to Damaſcus, whereby he was in a very powerful and extraordinary manner, on a ſudden, converted to Chriſtianity. Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. III.

ith ſo peculiar an energy, that they felt their hearts ſet on e, even when they did not perceive that it was he. In ſhort, ey declare that, at his departure, he bleſſed them, and com- rted them, and took his leave of them; and that, after they d received his laſt commands and directions, they ſaw him tually taken up from them, and aſcend into heaven. Here as no room for any dream or deception. [p] Men could never ncy: that they ſaw a perſon, for ſo many weeks together; at he ate and drank in their preſence; that he argued and xpounded the ſcriptures to them; convinced them of ſeveral rors and miſtakes; gave them promiſes, rules, and inſtructions r their own comfort, and the government of a church; and ter all went up into heaven in their ſight, whilſt angels ſtood y, and told them, [q] that he, who was taken up into heaven, ould come in like manner again, as they had ſeen him go into eaven: this, I ſay, could not be a dream or deception of their wn, and therefore if their teſtimony was falſe, it muſt have roceeded from a malevolent deſign to abuſe mankind with a ownright forgery.

2. BUT now, ſuppoſing them wicked enough to engage in ſo illanous a deſign, yet where would they have had abilities to xecute it? [r] They were not bred up in courts, or engaged in uch a way of living, wherein the arts and intrigues of the world ere either taught or practiſed; they were no men of polite onverſation, that, by the helps of philoſophy, and elegance of peech, were able to inſinuate a fondneſs, and raiſe an eſteem of hemſelves in the reſt of mankind; but their diſcourſes were lain and homely, as well as their education and condition in the orld ſuch, as could neither prompt their ambition, nor qualify hem for great attempts: they were, in ſhort, poor, illiterate ſhermen, and therefore not much in likelihood to entertain ſo reat a thought, as putting an impoſture upon the whole world. But, admitting they had cunning and courage enough to ſet bout it, yet how could they poſſibly promiſe themſelves ſucceſs, hen the profeſſed enemies of Chriſt's reſurrection had ſo many rgent and weighty reaſons to induce them, to uſe their utmoſt fforts to prove it falſe; when they had as much time and op- ortunity as they could deſire, in order to diſcover the impoſture; nd had power in their hands to enable them to examine ſuch erſons and things, as might conduce to the diſcovery? nay, put he caſe, that they were ſo ſubtle as to contrive, and ſo fortu- ate as to conceal the impoſture; yet ſtill we are to conſider hem as men, and conſequently, of the ſame paſſions and deſires ith other men; and being ſo, [s] that they ſhould relinquiſh all he darling pleaſures, profits, and accommodations of life, and oluntarily expoſe themſelves to ſcorn, to tortures, to perſecu- tions,

Could not impoſe a fraud with- out detec- tion.

[p] Ditton on the Reſurrection of Chriſt. [q] Acts i. 11. [r] Ditton, ibid. [s] South's ermons, Vol. V.

tions, and even death itſelf, only to propagate a ſtory, which they themſelves knew to be a lie, and that an abſurd, inſipid, incredible lie (if a lie at all) is a thing unnatural, and morally impoſſible.

It is abſurd to believe they could.

The truth is, [t] he, who can believe, that, without any kind of human means, or the divine aſſiſtance, they could impoſe upon all mankind, in an affair of the higheſt importance to them; that ſo notorious an impoſture could encounter, vanquiſh, and triumph over truth, in ſpite of all the oppoſition, which heaven and earth could make againſt it; that perſons, otherwiſe ſtrictly blameleſs in their lives, and rigidly virtuous, ſhould ſo zealouſly labour to maintain a lie, and freely expoſe themſelves to the fury of earth, and flames of hell, for the ſake of it; that they ſhould ſacrifice their lives and ſouls themſelves to the ghoſt of a crucified, and reputed malefactor; and, laſtly, that God, who is truth itſelf, ſhould, by enabling them to perform miraculous works, give authentic teſtimony to error and falſehood: he, I ſay, who denies the reſurrection, and can believe ſuch abſurdities as theſe, refuſes his aſſent to the beſt-atteſted fact in the world, and yields it to another, which, of all legends, is the moſt unlikely and improbable. For (to continue the thread of theſe abſurdities) [u] he muſt believe, that men, otherwiſe ſtrict in their lives and converſations, whom we find appealing to their proſelytes, how holily, how juſtly, how uprightly they had behaved themſelves among them, ſhould nevertheleſs, againſt the cleareſt dictates of conſcience, be guilty of ſuch an enormous villany as this impoſture implies: that men, who, in all their ſpeeches and actions, ſeemed to aim at nothing ſo much as the advancement of God's glory, and the promotion of goodneſs, ſhould, in their hearts, defy God, and deteſt all goodneſs, as they needs muſt do, if they were wilful cheats; and that men, who, both in their writings, and in the ſucceſs of their attempt, ſhewed no want of wiſdom, ſhould drive on a vain and ſenſeleſs project, and, with more unwearied induſtry, labour to maintain and diſperſe a lie, than any men beſides did ever employ for the confirmation of the greateſt truth. [x] He muſt believe, that a deſpicable company of wilful impoſtors, of an hated nation and religion, without learning or diſcipline, without ſkill or experience, without any of the arts of pleaſing, or recommending themſelves to mankind, ſhould run down all the wit, and power, and policy of the world, and, preaching an incredible, and ſeemingly ridiculous doctrine, directly contrary to all the worldly intereſt and humours of men, to their religion and cuſtoms, and to their reaſon and philoſophy too, ſhould be able to propagate the belief of it, far and wide through the earth. Nay, he muſt believe, that a few rude untaught mechanics were not only able, without any ſort of

t Cotes's Sermons. u Whitby's General Preface, Vol. I. x Ditton on the Reſurrection of Chriſt.

f aſſiſtance, to compaſs that vaſt deſign of making the world oop to the laws which they impoſed; but alſo, that they laid heir plot ſo deep, that the effect of it was permanent and laſting; ſo very deep, that none of all the penetrating and inquiſitive heads in the world, for a ſucceſſion of ſo many centuries, nd after the deepeſt reſearches and examinations, ſhould find it oſſible to diſcover the leaſt fault or flaw in the contrivance. le muſt believe, that theſe men, cunning as they were, had evertheleſs diveſted themſelves of all the principles of ſelf-love nd tenderneſs, of care and regard to their own preſervation; hat they deſpiſed all the comforts and enjoyments of life; that hey ventured upon poverty and miſery, upon ſhame and obquy, upon perſecution and torments, upon death and damnaon itſelf in the next world, and all for nothing, for no end or urpoſe that can be imagined or thought on; but bid defiance o all that human nature dreads and ſhuns, without having any eſign in view, or any grounds and reaſons for what they did. nd, laſtly, he muſt believe, that theſe cheats and impoſtors, as ile and wicked, as ſilly and ſenſeleſs as they were, did notwithanding furniſh mankind with the moſt exact ſyſtem of morality hat ever was, and taught ſuch rules of living, as were never o be expected from all the ſchools of philoſophy: that they, hoſe purpoſe it was to abuſe the world, laid the ſureſt foundaions of peace and happineſs; they, who were notorious hyporites, took indefatigable pains to make other men upright and ncere; they, who themſelves believed nothing of a God, did mpart the moſt rational and becoming notions of him to the reſt f mankind; and by no other principles, but thoſe of pure atheiſm nd irreligion, kindled a flame of deſire in the hearts of men to erve and obey, to worſhip and adore him. But theſe are aburdities too groſs to be ſwallowed; and yet every one, who iſbelieves the veracity of the apoſtles aſſerting our Lord's reurrection, muſt, in conſequence, believe all this.

y MEN indeed are often very poſitive in things, that afterwards prove falſe, and might have been detected ſooner, had hey but had either judgment or patience to examine them more trictly; eſpecially too, if there be any intereſt depending; for a reat ſtep towards the believing a thing to be true is the wiſhng it were ſo: but, in the caſe now before us, the diſciples were o far from being over-eager, that we may juſtly wonder how hey could poſſibly be ſo backward to believe, did we not know hat God in his great wiſdom ſo ordered the matter, that their ncredulity ſhould be our confirmation. The certainty of a reurrection in general, our Lord had frequently foretold, and that all, who were in the grave, ſhould one day hear his voice, and ome forth. The neceſſity of his own reſurrection, and the tated time of it, he had expreſsly declared; and, when he gave them

The apoſtles far from being credulous.

y Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels, Vol. II. z John v. 28, 29.

them warning, at any time, of his approaching death, he never failed to ſupport them withal by an aſſurance, that he would riſe again the third day; and yet, notwithſtanding all theſe warnings, [a] the women, who returned from the ſepulchre, and related their viſion of angels, were but indifferently received; [b] Mary Magdalene, who brought the news that ſhe had actually ſeen him, was not believed: the two diſciples, who had a long converſation with him, in their way to a village in the country, met with no better credit; nay, even when he appeared to the apoſtles aſſembled together, [c] they were terrified and affrighted, ſuppoſing that they had ſeen a ſpirit: when, to remove this fear, he commanded them to handle him, and ſo ſatisfy themſelves, that he was no empty apparition, they ſtill ſeem to be amazed, rather than convinced; and one carried his cautiouſneſs to ſuch a degree, that, without [d] thruſting his hand into his ſide, which the ſpear had pierced, and his fingers into the print of the nails, that faſtened him to the croſs, he would not believe, and in this our Saviour gratified him. Now, when the diſciples were ſo far from inclining to the belief of our Saviour's reſurrection, as to be rather obſtinately bent againſt it; when they would neither credit one another, nor their ownſelves, but cavilled at every freſh inſtance, and raiſed new ſcruples and new difficulties perpetually; and yet, when afterwards, theſe very men were ſo firmly perſuaded of this matter, that they ſtaked down their lives in atteſtation of it; theſe muſt needs be conſiderations of great weight to eſtabliſh their credit; they free them from all imputations of eaſineſs and partiality, ſince they proceeded ſo warily, and doubted every circumſtance, till their conviction was full, and no pretence left for their doubting any longer.

The teſtimony of enemies.

3. THERE is a further conſideration not to be neglected in the caſe now before us, and that is [e] the teſtimony of others, as well as his diſciples, to confirm the truth of our Saviour's reſurrection. The ſoldiers who watched at the ſepulchre to ſecure his body from the hands of the apoſtles; they who felt the earth trembling under them, who ſaw the countenance of [f] an angel like lightning, and upon that ſight did ſhake, and became as dead men; even ſome of theſe came into the city, and ſhewed unto the chief prieſts all the things that were done. Nay, the very Jews themſelves, by advancing ſo incredible a ſtory as that of his diſciples ſtealing him away, do in effect confeſs and corroborate a truth which they ſo very weakly endeavour to deſtroy. For can we imagine that the Romans, whoſe military diſcipline was ſo exceedingly ſtrict, ſhould neglect their poſt upon ſo extraordinary an emergency? Can we imagine that the great ſtone, which lay at the door of the ſepulchre, could be rolled away without any noiſe or diſturbance? Or that a company of men

a Luke xxiv. 11. b Mark xvi. 10. c Luke xxiv. 37. d John xx. 25. e Pearſon on the Creed. f Matth. xxviii. 2, &c.

men ſhould enter the place, ſtrip our Saviour of his grave-cloaths, take up his body and carry it away (all which muſt require ſome conſiderable time) and in the interim not one of the watch awake? But ſuppoſing them all aſleep, can we ſuppoſe that his poor dejected diſciples would ever undertake ſo bold an attempt? Are not theſe the very men that upon the firſt aſſault in the garden all forſook him and fled? * They durſt not ſtand by him even then, when he declared it in his power to call for twelve legions of angels to his reſcue, and have they now the confidence to come in a body and bear away his corps? They had but two ſwords among them all before, and he, who had the courage to make uſe of one of them, durſt not afterwards ſo much as own any knowledge of his maſter: and is the caſe now ſo mightily changed, that theſe poor, naked, and diſpirited creatures ſhould attempt a detachment of armed men, whoſe order and buſineſs was to expect and be provided for them? Is this a likely thing, that they who durſt not ſo much as appear in public, but aſſembled themſelves privately, and ſhut up their doors for fear of the Jews, ſhould all on a ſudden grow valiant, or rather fool-hardy to this degree, when he in whom they truſted was dead, and when the ſtouteſt of them all trembled at the voice of a ſilly maid, and abjured him ſhamefully while he was alive, to avoid the danger of an inquiſitive tongue? Theſe are difficulties never to be got over; ſuch as will never ſuffer any man who conſiders them to believe that rude and idle pretence which the Jews made uſe of to diſprove our Saviour's reſurrection; and theſe are ſuch arguments as are commonly produced to illuſtrate the account which the apoſtle gives us of this great article of our chriſtian faith; † whom they ſlew and hanged on a tree, him God raiſed up the third day, and ſhewed him openly, not to all the people, but unto witneſſes choſen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him, after he roſe from the dead.

An objection.

" BUT if the reſurrection of Chriſt was ſo neceſſary to prove ' the truth of his divine miſſion, why was it not atteſted after ' ſuch a manner, as to leave no poſſible room for doubt and ' ſcruple concerning the certainty of it? Why did not he, ' inſtead of leaving his perſecutors and crucifiers to be ſatisfied ' by the teſtimony of his apoſtles, make an open and triumphant entry into Jeruſalem after he was riſen; appear in the ' temple, and every place of public concourſe, that every eye ' might ſee him, and every heart receive full conviction? ' Herod and Pilate, Annas and Caiaphas, the prieſts and elders ' of the Sanhedrim, &c. had been the irrefragable witneſſes of ' his reſurrection; and indeed more fit and credible than the ' apoſtles themſelves, who were his friends and followers:

* Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels, Vol. II. † Acts x. 39, &c. g Clagget's Sermons, Vol. I.

" for who would not have been ſatisfied with the teſtimony of " his enemies? Since then this way of convincing the world " would have been moſt effectual, it ſeems reaſonable to ſup- " poſe, that, had Jeſus been Chriſt and riſen from the dead, " he would, without controverſy, have made it his option, but " ſince we find he did not, we have ſome reaſon to ſuſpect " him." Now, [h] though the will and good pleaſure of God be a ſufficient reaſon to us for all his actions, yet there is ſome- thing peculiar in this diſpenſation of his reſurrection, which made it not ſo proper for him to appear commonly after he was riſen from the dead. For, being now to act according to the majeſty of the divine nature, and not according to the infirmi- ties and condeſcenſion of the human, it did not ſo well comport with the dignity he had aſſumed, to converſe publicly, or to ſubmit himſelf to the cenſures and freſh affronts of his enemies. But ſuppoſe it had been conſiſtent with his honour and dignity, yet [i] the unbelieving Jews, eſpecially the chief prieſts and rulers, were of all men moſt unworthy to whom God ſhould afford ſo extraordinary a way of conviction. They had already deſpiſed the evidence that was given them; and not only ſo, but mali- ciouſly imputed the plaineſt miracles that ever were wrought to the power and operation of the devil. Now, if any thing can render men incapable of the favour of farther conviction, ſuch a malicious reſiſtance of the evidence which our Saviour's miracles carried along with them, would probably do it; eſpe- cially if we conſider that the greateſt of all the miracles which he wrought in his life-time (I mean the raiſing Lazarus from the grave after he had been dead four days) was ſo far from convincing them, that though they could not deny the thing, yet from thence [k] they took occaſion to reſolve to put him to death. And therefore what reaſon was there that Chriſt ſhould appear to them for their conviction, who had conſpired to com- paſs his death, even becauſe they knew that he had raiſed one from the dead?

Anſwered.

Such a pub- lic appear- ance incon- ſiſtent with Chriſt's honour.

What the Jews de- ſerve not.

[l] HAD Chriſt, after he was riſen, appeared ſo publicly to the Jews as the objection here requires, it is not to be queſ- tioned but that they would have offered to lay violent hands upon him, as they had before deſigned to kill Lazarus, and that for the ſame reaſon. In which caſe, had our Saviour vaniſhed out of their ſight and hands (as doubtleſs he would) what would the Jews have concluded from hence, but that they had ſeen a ghoſt, a ſpectre or apparition? And what conviction would that have wrought in them; but that their ſenſes had been impoſed upon by ſome magical illuſion? And what effect could this have had upon their minds, towards bringing them to a belief that Chriſt was truly riſen, and much leſs that he was

What would not have con- vinced them,

h Jenkins's Reaſonableneſs of the Chriſtian Religion, Vol. II. i Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. III. k John xi. 47, 53. l South's Sermons, Vol. V.

was the true Meſſiah? None at all. Many of the Jews (among whom we may ſuppoſe the chief-prieſts and elders, who hired the ſoldiers to ſtifle the belief of Chriſt's reſurrection with a falſe ſtory of their own invention) were given up to hardneſs of heart, and would not have believed, or, if they believed, would not have teſtified that they had ever ſeen Chriſt after his reſurrection.

nor help the cauſe of chriſtianity.

[m] THEY that are wicked enough to deny what they believe, will, at a pinch, deny alſo what they know to be true. Supposing then that our Lord had ſhewed himſelf to all his enemies, and to all the people, and but ſome of them, eſpecially of the great men in authority, had denied that ever they ſaw him after his reſurrection, this would have exceedingly weakened the teſtimony of thoſe that had vouched and confeſſed it. For he that appeals to the knowledge of another for the truth of a matter of fact, is ſo far from gaining, that he loſes credit by the appeal, if that other perſon denies that he knows any thing of it. If therefore our Lord had appeared to his perſecutors (it being likely that his diſciples would have appealed to their knowledge) his perſecutors, by proteſting the contrary, would have made a terrible advantage againſt the chriſtians upon that appeal. So that the wiſdom of Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, in making choice of particular witneſſes, viz. ſuch perſons only as would be ſo far from diſſembling their own knowledge, that they would always be ready to ſeal their teſtimony with their blood, is very conſpicuous; inaſmuch as he hath ſettled the chriſtian faith upon a better foundation this way, than if he had appeared in the temple, or in the midſt of Jeruſalem, to the whole people of the Jews. [n] It is not the number of the witneſſes, but the character and qualifications of the perſons, and the evidence itſelf in its full force and circumſtances, which are chiefly to be regarded in matters of this nature. If but a few men can, as the apoſtles did, by undeniable miracles make it ſufficiently appear, that what they can ſay is true, and that God himſelf confirms the truth of it, they can appeal to every man's own ſenſes, before whom they work miracles, and make every one that ſees them a witneſs to the truth of their doctrines. In this caſe God himſelf bears witneſs to it, and what the high-prieſt ſaid upon a very different one, every ſtander-by finds himſelf conſtrained to declare, [p] What need have we of any farther witneſſes? For we ourſelves have heard out of their own mouths, (in the miraculous gift of tongues) or ſeen with our own eyes the many wonderful works which were wrought in the moſt public manner in teſtimony of Chriſt's reſurrection.

The ſubſtance of the anſwer.

IF then, it was not ſo conſiſtent with the dignity of Chriſt, after his reſurrection, to converſe publicly, and the Jews, leaſt of all deſerved

m Clagget's Sermons, Vol. I. n Jenkins's Reaſonableneſs of the Chriſtian Religion, Vol. II. p Matth. xxvi. 65.

deſerved ſuch a favour and vouchſafement for their conviction: if, in all probability, they would not have been convinced by this method; or, if convinced, would not have made open declarations of what they knew to the world, but perhaps prejudiced the cauſe of Chriſt, by an obſtinate denial of it; the caſe is plain, that in chuſing a ſmaller number of proper witneſſes, and in ſupporting them with miraculous gifts, to aſſert the truth of their teſtimony, God provided better for the manifeſtation of his Son's reſurrection, as the firm eſtabliſhment of his holy religion, than if he had collected never ſo many of the greateſt, the wiſeſt, the ſubtileſt heads in all Judea, for that purpoſe; ſince the weaker and more contemptible the inſtruments were, the more conſpicuous was the power and wiſdom of God, in bringing about an event ſo ſtupendous. For herein is the wiſdom of God magnified, when [q] he chuſes the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe, and herein his power made viſible, when he chuſes the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty. And ſo we proceed,

The manner of Chriſt's reſurrection.

II. To obſerve in what manner, and for what purpoſes, this reſurrection of Chriſt was effected. And here [r] it will be of no great uſe to inquire whether our Saviour's body, from the time of his death to his reſurrection, was kept in a complete organization, that ſo by this miracle it might be preſerved in a natural ſtate for his ſoul to re-enter; or whether, by the courſe of nature, the vaſt number of inward veſſels that are in the body, were ſtopped, and, all on a ſudden, when the time of the reſurrection came, put into a vital ſtate again, in order to be animated by his ſoul: either way there muſt be a miracle; though in the former, the words of the Pſalmiſt ſeem to be better anſwered, thou wilt not ſuffer thy holy One to ſee corruption. To as little purpoſe is it to inquire how our Saviour's new body was ſupplied with blood, ſince the greateſt part of it was loſt upon the croſs; whether by the power of God it was brought back again into his veins, or a ſupply of new blood made and injected by a miracle: or, to inquire whether his body, that was then in the nature of a glorified body, though yet on earth, needed the ſupplies of blood to furniſh new ſpirits for the ſervice of the natural functions. This in general is certain, that the ſame ſoul returned back to the ſame body, ſo that the ſame man, who actually died, actually roſe again; that this was effected by a divine power, which power was in himſelf; [s] for as the firſt man Adam was made a living ſoul, ſo the laſt was made a quickening Spirit; and, laſtly, that this was effected [t] at a convenient diſtance of time; for Chriſt continued in his grave ſo

q 1 Cor. i. 27. r Burnet on the Articles. s 1 Cor. xv. 45. t Barrow on the Creed. *En te trite hemera*, in the third day, ſays the creed, and not after the third day: for, as St Auſtin remarks, our Lord was not three whole days in the grave, but only the intire ſecond day, and part of the firſt and laſt. Now, according

long that all people might be certain he was really dead, be-
nd all poſſibility of recovery by natural means; and he defer-
d his reſurrection no longer, becauſe it was fitting, that, while
ens memories were freſh, their paſſions warm, and their
ouths open in diſcourſe of his death; while the watch was
, and the witneſſes preſent, and both friends and enemies
tending the event; it was then moſt fitting, I ſay, that he,
ho was made of the ſeed of David according to the fleſh,
ould declare himſelf to be the Son of God with power,
cording to the Spirit of holineſs, by the reſurrection from
e dead: and this ſuggeſts one purpoſe ſerved by this great
ent, viz.

1. THE vindication of the dignity of our Saviour's perſon, as well as the efficacy of his performances. [u] For if the meanneſs of his birth and parentage, the low eſtate and condition of his life, and the bitter ſorrows and diſgraces of his death ſhould breed any ſuſpicion concerning the man Chriſt Jeſus, whether he were indeed (as he pretended to be) the Son of God, the Saviour of mankind, and the Judge of all the world; if ſuch homely circumſtances as attended him, I ſay, and ſuch ſad accidents as befel his perſon, ſhould, in the eyes of thoſe who look not

The purpoſes of it. A vindication of Chriſt's perſon and performances.

cording to the language of the ſcriptures, if Chriſt was ſlain, and roſe the rd day, the day in which he died is one; and the day on which he roſe is other; and conſequently, there could be but one day and two nights between e day of his death and his reſurrection. The ſame is to be obſerved in the ſe of circumciſion. The male-child of eight days old was to be circumciſed: which eight days, the day wherein the child was born was one, and that herein it was circumciſed was another; and ſo there was but ſix complete ys between the day of his birth, and the day of his circumciſion. If then it ould be aſked, how our Saviour could ſay of his own reſurrection, that, as nas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, ſo ſhould the Son of n be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth: there is nothing re uſual, we muſt know, both in the Greek and Hebrew languages, than, by e common figure Synecdoche, to uſe part of the day or night to denote the ole day or night, as our learned Pearſon abundantly ſhews, where he proces Leo the Great [de Reſurrect. Domini, Ser. 1.] giving this reaſon for our viour's abbreviating the time of his interment; Ne turbatos diſcipulorum imos longa Mœſtitudo cruciaret, denunciatam tridui moram tam mira celeate breviavit, ut dum ad integrum ſecundum diem pars primi noviſſima, & rs tertii prima, concurrit, & aliquantum temporis ſpatio decideret, & nihil rum numero deperiret. Vid. Pearſon on Art. V. Though therefore Chriſt etold that he ſhould be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights; t, if he was pleaſed to be there a ſhorter time, it was no violation of his word, t rather is to be accounted a ſingular kindneſs done to his diſciples, that they ght the ſooner be comforted and refreſhed by his return to them. It is apent from ſcripture that God hath ſhortened the time of ſome prophecies and dictions, to comfort and encourage his people; nay, that this ſhall be true the very day of judgment, and that, for the elect's ſake, as our Saviour him- tells us; and therefore, if our Saviour roſe ſooner than what the words y ſeem to import, his promiſe is certainly made good, nay bettered by his rly riſing, for if a friend acquaints me that, after three days are paſſed, he ll beſtow ſuch a favour upon me, and yet ſhall think fit to do it within a day er his promiſe; it would be unreaſonable to complain that my friend kept his word, when I had ſo much reaſon to thank him for haſtening his courſy. The ſimilitude is very eaſy to be applied to the preſent purpoſe.

not beyond outward appearances, tend to his diſparagement the wonderful power and favour of God, demonſtrated in h reſurrection, not only wipes off this diſgrace, but adds a fre luſtre and glory to the ſacredneſs of his perſon. For if God yielding him to death looked like a diſregard, his raiſing him life again much more denotes a tender relation and affection him; ſince that might proceed from different grounds, but th can admit of no other interpretation. * For if God raiſed hi up from the dead, who was condemned and put to death fo calling himſelf the Son of God, this is a demonſtration, beyon all contradiction, that he was in reality what he pretended be; unleſs we could ſuppoſe (what is mental blaſphemy ſuppoſe) that God would countenance an impoſtor, and ſet th broad ſeal of heaven to a falſehood.

AND as the reſurrection of Chriſt ſhews the great worth an divinity of his perſon, ſo is it of great ſervice to confirm ou faith in the efficacy of his performances. x When man ha by tranſgreſſing the laws of his Maker, forfeited that life whic was, at firſt, beſtowed upon him by the free gift of God, an which he held upon the tenure of his obedience; Chriſt wa pleaſed to lay down his own life, in order to reſcue him fro the power and dominion of death. This was a work of the la conſequence to mankind, y but wherein they could have n ſatisfaction, ſo long as they ſaw death (the known wages of ſi maintain its full force and power over him who pretended conquer it, and holding him like an obnoxious perſon, i durance and captivity. But now that they ſee their Savio riſen, and the price which he paid for their redemption, decla ed by his reſurrection, to be accepted by God; z ſince he ha acknowledged a full ſatisfaction done to his juſtice, by diſchargi their ſurety from priſon, a who ſhall lay any thing to the charg of God's elect? It is God that juſtifieth: who is he that co demneth? It is Chriſt that died, yea, rather that is riſen again

The proof of the truth of his religion.

2. ANOTHER end and uſe, ſerved in our Saviour's reſur rection, is to prove and aſcertain the truth and divine authori of his moſt holy religion. b If Chriſt had not riſen from th dead, but for ever been detained in the grave, notwithſtandi all that might be urged from the goodneſs of his doctrine, th innocence of his life, and the multitude of his miracles, for th proof of the truth of chriſtianity (though very ſtrong and co cluſive proofs they be) I very much queſtion whether it woul have met with the ſame ready entertainment in the world tha we find it has. His doctrine might have been thought a com pilation from antient ſyſtems, and not beyond the reach and in vention of other philoſophers: his many great works and mi racles might have been imputed to his ſkill in magic, or a fami liarit

* Cotes's Sermons. x Smalridge's Sermons. y South's Sermons, Vol. I z Barrow on the Creed. a Rom. viii 33, 34. b Sharpe's Sermons.

rity with the devil: and the virtue and innocence of his life counted nothing more than a ſtale trick and artifice to impoſe on the eaſy and credulous world. But now, when it appears at this Jeſus, who taught this holy religion, who did thoſe iraculous works, and lived that virtuous life, after he was put a cruel death, did riſe to life again, and converſed upon earth r forty days together, and after that, in the preſence of many ectators, did viſibly aſcend into heaven; here is no room left r any ſuſpicion of this nature, but all pretences of impoſture perfectly vaniſh: inſomuch, that, it is impoſſible for any man believe Chriſt's reſurrection, and, at the ſame time, harbour y doubt of the truth of his religion.

FOR let us thus reaſon. Chriſt over and over again told his oſtles, [a] that he ſhould be put to death; but that, within ree days, he would riſe again: nay, this he told, not only to s diſciples, but to all the people; and [b] gave it as a token, hereby they might know and be convinced, whether he was what he pretended to be) the Son of God, and that great pro-et which was to come into the world: nay, he gave it as the ſt and greateſt evidence he had to give; and [c] ſuch, as if it iled of convincing them, they were to expect no other from s hands. Our Saviour now laying ſuch a ſtreſs upon this oint of his reſurrection, and putting his whole cauſe (as it ere) upon this iſſue, I aſk, how is it poſſible to imagine that od Almighty ſhould make theſe predictions of his good, if he as not really what he pretended to be?

[a] IF Chriſt had been an impoſtor, it had been the eaſieſt mat-r in the world to have ſtifled all his pretences for ever. It ad but been to have let him mouldered away to duſt in his rave, as all other men do, and as he, without the help of om-ipotence, would have done; and then all the world would ave ſeen that he was a deceiver. But now when, inſtead of eriſhing in the grave, he was, after three days, reſtored to life gain, as he had foretold the people; what are we to conclude om hence? Did not God, in this, appear with a witneſs as a oucher and approver of his cauſe? Was not this a demonſtra-on to all the world that Jeſus Chriſt was no deceiver, but that e came from God, and that whatever he delivered was the ruth of God, and to be received as the oracles of God? Cer-ainly it was. For that any man ſhould be raiſed from the dead, y any other power than the power of God, all the world nows to be impoſſible: but then, to ſuppoſe that God ſhould mploy his power to give teſtimony to a falſehood, is ſuch a ning as no man, who has any notion of the ſacred attributes of od, and thinks it inconſiſtent with his faithfulneſs and truth to lay

a Matth. xvi. 21. John xvi. 16. b John ii. 19. c Matth. xii. 39, 40.

lay an invincible temptation and ſnare before all mankind to believe an impious lie, can poſſibly imagine.

THUS the reſurrection of Chriſt reſolves itſelf into God's veracity, and may very juſtly be eſteemed the baſis and foundation on which the whole fabric of our religion ſtands, the ſum and abridgment of the chriſtian faith, and the one thing neceſſary to be believed by us in order to our ſalvation; for [e] if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth, ſays the apoſtle, the Lord Jeſus, and believe with thine heart that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved.

A pledge of our own reſurrection.

3. ANOTHER deſign of our Saviour's reſurrection was to confirm our faith and hope, by giving us a certain pledge of our own. [f] The reſurrection of any one man proves a reſurrection to be poſſible; but the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt proves the reſurrection of all men to be infallible. For Chriſt did affirm of himſelf that he would raiſe the dead; and in proof of the truth of that aſſertion, he raiſed himſelf from the dead: there cannot therefore remain any room to doubt, whether he can make good that promiſe to us, after he hath already accompliſhed, in his own perſon, what he hath promiſed to fulfil in ours. Hath he raiſed up his own body out of the grave, and ſhall he not raiſe up ours alſo? Hath he effected what is more difficult, and can he want ability to do what is far eaſier? Were there no mention made in ſcripture of his raiſing the dead; were the exerciſe of this act of omnipotence no where in direct terms aſcribed to him; yet ſince whatever powers belong to the Father, do alſo belong to the Son, we might, from the identity of the Father and Son both in attributes and operations, ſafely infer the efficacy of the Son, in raiſing the dead; but now, when the ſcriptures affirm, that [g] as the Father raiſed up the dead, and quickeneth them, ſo the Son of man quickeneth and raiſeth whom he will; when they exhibit him as the common repreſentative of mankind, and thereupon declare, that [h] as in Adam all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive; when they ſtile him [i] the Head of the Body, the Church, and the Firſt-born from the dead; and thereupon give us aſſurance that we, who are his members, are to follow; and that ſince [k] our life is hid with him in God, when he, who is our life, ſhall appear, then ſhall we alſo appear with him; and laſtly, when they call him [l] the Firſt-fruits of them that ſleep, in alluſion to a cuſtom among the Jews, where a little quantity of corn, be it but a ſheaf, or handful, conſecrated, *i. e.* offered to God, as the firſt-fruits of the year, derived a bleſſing upon the reſt, and was the earneſt of a complete harveſt: when theſe, and ſuch like alluſions and compariſons, theſe, and ſuch like declarations and promiſes, do every where meet us in ſcripture, we have all the aſſurance imaginable

e Rom. x. 9. f Smalridge's Sermons. g John v. 21. h 1 Cor. xv. 22.
i Col. i. 18. k Ibid. iii. 3, 4. l 1 Cor. xv. 20.

aginable that the reſurrection of our Saviour is a certain edge of the reſurrection of all mankind; that his is the firſt d leading ſtep toward that univerſal triumph over death and e grave, which ours in due time will complete; and that, if the Spirit of him, who raiſed up Jeſus from the dead, velleth in us, he, that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead, will alſo icken our mortal bodies, [n] that they may be made like unto s glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby e is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf. And therefore bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, cording to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a vely hope, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that fadeth not way, reſerved in heaven for us.

4. ANOTHER deſign of our Saviour's reſurrection is, to lay riſtians under a ſtrong obligation to virtue and holineſs: for is we may obſerve, that the writers of the New Teſtament all along deliver the doctrine of Chriſt's reſurrection as a actical doctrine, and make it an emblem of our ſpiritual riſing om the grave of ſin. [p] Their manner of arguing is thus;— If Chriſt was crucified for our ſins, then ought we to crucify them in our members; and if Chriſt roſe again the third day, then are we engaged, in conformity to him, to riſe again to newneſs of life, and to lead a ſpiritual, divine, and heavenly life, ſuch a life as he now lives with God." The apoſtle the Romans, in a very appoſite and elegant ſimilitude, taken om the form of baptiſm, has taught us this uſe of our Saviour's ſurrection: [q] We are buried, ſays he, with Chriſt by baptiſm to death, that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by e glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs life. For if we have been planted together in the likeneſs his death, we ſhall be alſo in the likeneſs of his reſurrection: d therefore reckon ye yourſelves to be dead indeed unto ſin, but ive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. And indeed, we conſider the nature of the thing itſelf, nothing can ſupply s with more powerful motives to live well than the contemlation of our Lord's reſurrection. [r] For, when we reflect pon the full ſatisfaction which he hath made for ſin, what can e a greater encouragement to a virtuous life than the ſenſe of pacified God, looking graciouſly upon us, and accepting our ncere, though imperfect endeavours, for the ſake of his Son's revailing merits? When we reflect on our own weakneſs and ability to do good, and perceive, at the ſame time, that by our aviour's riſing from the grave, he is able to aſſiſt us, and e may do all things through him that ſtrengthens us; this ves us great courage and reſolution in our ſpiritual warfare.

An obligation to virtue and godlineſs.

m Rom. viii. 11. n Phil. iii. 21. o 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. p Sharpe's Sermons. Rom. vi. 4, &c. r Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I.

When we reflect that Christ, having overcome death, is seated at the right hand of God, and there offers up his own merits, joined with the prayers of all believers: this surely should engage us to draw near to the throne of grace, with full assurance of faith, and to take great heed that all our supplications and prayers proceed from a pure and upright conscience. Once more, when we reflect on Christ's resurrection, and fix this contemplation in our minds, that our Proxy, our Head, our Redeemer, our Saviour, has left earth for heaven, and is there incircled with ineffable glory; how can it be but that this consideration should prevail with us to despise the world, and breathe after heaven, and to desire to depart, and to be with Christ, who is enthroned there already? For, can we have so mean an affection for our Saviour as to be content to stay behind him? Can we think of happiness, and of the Author of it, both in heaven, and not earnestly desire to be there, lost and swallowed up in the contemplation and fruition of our Lord? These are some of the consequences of this doctrine: and therefore, to conclude with the apostle's exhortation; [s] If then ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, and set your affection on things above, and not on things on the earth, for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ, in God.

Thomas's unbelief.

OUR blessed Saviour, after his resurrection from the dead, took great care to give his disciples a speedy information of it, by the women, who saw the vision of angels; by Mary Magdalene, who saw our Lord himself; by the two brethren, with whom he travelled and conversed; and by his own appearing to ten of them, and giving them all the demonstrations they could desire. So full and authentic a testimony, from so many different people, at so many different times, might have been enough, one would think, to convince any one that was not unreasonably scrupulous. But Thomas, who happened to be absent at the time of our Saviour's appearance, was so far from crediting the report of his brethren, that he declares his resolution not to be convinced, without the utmost evidence that all his senses, capable of judging of such a matter, could receive; [t] except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

The nature,

1. To find out the character of this apostle, we must take a little notice of the several passages, wherein mention is made of him in the gospel. [u] Our Saviour, forewarning his disciples of his approaching death, tells them very kindly, * In my Father's house are many mansions.—I go to prepare a place for you, and whither I go, you know, and the way you know: to which Thomas answers very peremptorily; Lord, we know not whither thou

s Col. iii. 1. t John xx. 25. u Young's Sermons, Vol. II. * John xiv. 2, &c.

u goeſt, and how ſhould we know the way: as if he had ſaid, Lord, thou ſayeſt, thou art going to thy Father's houſe to provide manſions for us: now we know thy Father's houſe, according to natural generation, is that of Joſeph and Mary, in which many manſions are not to be had: but if thou meaneſt a father of any other kind of generation, or any other inheritance, to which thou haſt a title to recommend us, this is what we do not underſtand, and what we do not underſtand, it is impoſſible for us to believe."

WHILE our Saviour was in Galilee, and, upon the news of zarus's ſickneſs, propoſed to go into Judea, and viſit him, his ciples endeavoured to divert him, by telling him; [x] Maſter, e Jews of late ſought to ſtone thee, and goeſt thou thither ain? But he ſtill perſiſting in his reſolution, and telling them thal, that Lazarus was dead, Thomas turns to his fellow-ciples, and ſays, Let us alſo go, that we may die with him: if he ſhould ſay, "Lazarus is dead, and all his pains and fears are at an end, and better it were for us, if ours were ſo too. The Jews malice is bent upon the deſtruction of us all, and if our Maſter could not ſave his principal friend from death, what hope is there of his ſaving us? Let us go then, and meet our doom as patiently as we can."

THE laſt mention of this apoſtle is in the inſtance of the reſurrection. [y] He had been told that our Saviour was riſen om the dead, and the truth of it had been atteſted to him by idences beyond exception. Several companies had ſeen him, d converſed with him ſeveral times, to whom he had expoſed e ſight and feeling of his wounds; to whom he had expounded e ſcriptures concerning himſelf, and with whom he had broken e ſacramental bread, &c. All theſe people, with all theſe nvincing tokens, had told Thomas that Chriſt was riſen; and t Thomas (in pure wiſdom) would not believe, and might rhaps reaſon himſelf into this conduct, by ſome ſuch arguments theſe; [z] "Jeſus of Nazareth was put to death upon the croſs; and being dead, was laid, and ſealed up in his ſepulchre, ſtrictly watched with a guard of ſoldiers: but I am told, and required to believe, that, notwithſtanding all this, he is riſen, and is indeed alive. Now ſurely things, ſuitable to the ſtated courſe of nature, ſhould be believed, before ſuch, as are quite beſide it: for a dead man to return to life is preternatural; but that thoſe, who report this, may be miſtaken, is very natural and uſual. Dead I ſaw him; but that he is riſen, I only hear: in what I ſee with mine eyes, I cannot eaſily be deceived; but in what I only hear, I may, and often am. Here being two things then propoſed to my belief, my reaſon tells me, that I ought to chuſe that, which is more credible: but it ſeems more credible, that a ſmall number of witneſſes, "frightened

[x] John xi. 8, &c. [y] Young's Sermons, Vol. II. [z] South's Sermons, Vol. V.

" frightened and disturbed as they are, may be deceived, or
" (as honest as once they were) may be drawn into confede-
" racy to deceive me, than that one should rise from the dead;
" because this cannot be done without a miracle, and wise men
" will never have recourse to miracles, so long as nature can
" solve the appearance."

THIS seems to have been the silent reasoning of Thomas's mind, when called upon by his brethren to believe the report of their Lord's resurrection; and, from these several passages put together, we may conclude, that he was a man of a slow and timorous temper; free enough indeed in arguing, but extremely nice and scrupulous in believing; full of doubts and hesitations, and loth to embrace any thing for a truth, that he did not rightly understand, without the fullest conviction and demonstration. This is what is called his Unbelief, or hardness to be persuaded, and how culpable it was, in the case before us, we shall, in the next place, endeavour to shew.

and aggravations of it.

2. [a] A RESURRECTION from the dead, it is confessed, was new and a strange event, which the generality of mankind held altogether incredible; but, in the case of Jesus, and the circumstances of Thomas, the disbelief of it seems incapable of excuse. The antient prophecies concerning the Messias had spoken so fully to this point; [b] That thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, that our Lord, in his conversation with the two travellers to Emmaus, charges them with folly and slowness of heart, for not being convinced upon this testimony alone. He had frequently, during his abode upon earth, given the apostles warning of it: he had told the Jews, that whenever they should [c] destroy the temple of his body, in the compass of three days he would raise it up again. He never [d] mentioned the sufferings, appointed for him to accomplish at Jerusalem, without remembring to close that melancholy subject with the comfortable promise of returning to life again; and this promise, great and surprising as it was, Thomas could not but be satisfied, that he was able to perform, by the many miracles which he saw daily wrought by him; his reviving Jairus's daughter, which he could not but know, and especially his raising Lazarus so lately, of which himself was an eye-witness. What more now could be expected in reason, but competent evidence, that a thing, so often promised, so clearly foretold, and what Jesus had proved himself so capable of doing, was actually performed? And were not the women, who had seen him, and the vision of angels; the two travellers, who had heard him discourse, and expound the scriptures to them; and [e] the unanimous assertions of the ten brethren, recounting to him all the passages of our Saviour's appearance to them, sufficient for this purpose? What

a Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. IV. b Luke xxiv. 46. c John ii. 19, 21. d Matth. xvi. 21. xx. 19. e John xx. 25.

hat reaſonable ſuſpicion could he have of their being under
y temptation to deceive him, or under any infatuation to be
ceived themſelves? Their long and intimate acquaintance with
ſus was ſufficient to diſtinguiſh him from any other perſon,
d abundant care was taken to ſatisfy them, that this was not
airy form in his ſhape, by having his hands and his feet
ndled. Nay, his very diſcourſe denoted what he was, the
ling his own former ſayings to remembrance, the opening
eir underſtandings, the expounding and arguing out of ſcrip-
re, ſavoured of that peculiar authority, with which he always
ught, and [f] the breathing upon them, giving them the Holy
oſt, and commiſſion to preach and act in his, and his Father's
me, were characters as plain, that this perſon was their own
fter, the very Chriſt of God.

THESE are the aggravations of Thomas's unbelief, which are
l heightened by this conſideration, that, when he refuſed to
mit conviction from the ſenſe and atteſtation of ſo many credible
tneſſes, he at the ſame time declared it reaſonable to be deter-
ned by the verdict of his own ſenſe; never conſidering what
haughty piece of injuſtice it was, to ſuppoſe that his own ſingle
nſe was leſs fallible, than the joint experience of ſuch a number.
t to do juſtice to the memory of this apoſtle, it muſt not be
rgot, that, after our Saviour had vouchſafed him the conviction
deſired (which he did not do, becauſe the former evidences
d been inſufficient, or to warrant the rejection of them in
hers, but out of infinite goodneſs, and particular condeſcenſion
his preſent infirmity) we find him making an ample compen-
tion for his former diſtruſt, by a moſt noble confeſſion; [g] for
anſwered, and ſaid, My Lord, and my God: I call it a noble
nfeſſion, becauſe the beſt interpreters of ſcripture, have un-
rſtood by it, that Thomas did not only recognize Jeſus for the
eſſiah, the very ſame Lord, to whom he had been a ſervant
d companion during the ſpace of his miniſtry; but that he,
oreover, owned his divine nature, and, from the power exerted
his reſurrection, drew this conſequence, that he muſt neceſſa-
y be the Son of God. So mighty, ſo ſudden a change do we
d in this apoſtle, that the perſon, who ſo lately he could not
prevailed upon to account any other, than a dead man, loſt
all hopes and poſſibility of returning, he now adores and ad-
res, as the Almighty and Ever-living God.

3. AND from hence we may poſſibly conjecture right, that
e chief reaſon, why God permitted this apoſtle to be ſo ſcru-
lous and doubtful, in the point of his Son's reſurrection, was
the fuller confirmation of our belief of it. It might indeed
urged before, that our Lord had not given all the proofs of
reſurrection, that the nature of the thing was capable of:
ut now, when nothing was left unaſked, that the moſt ſceptical
doubts

The reaſons of God's permitting it.

[f] John xx. 22. [g] Ibid. ver. 28. * Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels, Vol. IV.

doubts could pretend to desire; when the very apostles themselves had one of their number, that held out a considerable time, and then preached not his doctrine, till his scruples were intirely removed; when even this doubter himself was no less vigorous and positive afterwards, in asserting the truth of a point which nothing but a demonstration could make him believe; this takes off all imputation of credulity and easiness: it shews that the apostles proceeded with great caution, before they embarked in the cause of christianity; but at the same time, it makes the doubts of others more inexcuseable. This disciple doubted and was satisfied for us all: his former unbelief adds such strength to the cause he pleads, and makes him a witness so much above exception, that the scruples, which in him were weakness, in those that follow him, and know his story, will be wilfulness and resolved infidelity. Let us then observe, and thankfully admire the wisdom and goodness of our God and Saviour, who converted the failings of an eminent servant to such excellent advantage, that not only his own mind was better established from his doubts, but even gainsayers likewise are more effectually put to silence, and out of his weakness, all succeeding believers are made strong; learning from his example, to lay aside our scruples upon sufficient conviction; and to make some amends by our after-acts, for any offence which these scruples might have given while we continued in them.

SECT. I.

Of CHRIST's Ascension.

Whether Christ ascended more than once.

THE space from our Saviour's resurrection to his ascension into heaven, at least, that last and signal ascension, at which so great a number of his disciples were present, we are told in the sacred records, was forty days; but whether he continued all that while on earth, in the company and conversation of his disciples, or more constantly resided in heaven, and appeared to them occasionally only, and as oft as was necessary for their conviction and instruction, *i. e.* whether, at the end of the forty days, he ascended once for all, or, during the space of that time, had several removes to heaven, is of late become a matter of dispute among the learned. The common notion indeed has been for a constant stay upon earth, and a sole ascension after forty days: and for the support of this opinion, some are apt to suppose,[h] that Christ intended to keep a proportion between the gospel, and the law of Moses; that, as he suffered at the time of the killing of the passover, so the effusion of the Holy Ghost, being fixed to the day of Pentecost, whereon the law was given, he determined to stay on earth, until that time

Arguments for the negative.

[h] Burnet on the Articles.

as near, that he might not put his apoſtles upon too long an pectation without his preſence, which might be neceſſary to imate them, till they ſhould be endued with power from on gh. They produce likewiſe the authority of the apoſtle to the ebrews, who tells us expreſsly, that [i] neither by the blood of ats or calves, but by his own blood, Chriſt entered in once to the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us; d from the immenſe diſtance between earth and heaven, they e at a loſs they ſay to conceive how frequent aſcents and de- nts could be practicable. Our Saviour indeed cautions Mary agdalene, falling at his feet in order to worſhip and embrace m, as we may preſume; [k] touch me not; for I have not yet ended to my Father: but theſe words may not imply, that was then going to aſcend; on the contrary, [l] by a figure, mmon enough among grammarians, who frequently change e tenſe for another, they may denote, that he was not then out to aſcend, but to ſtay many days upon earth; ſo that Mary ght have ſpace and opportunity enough to pay her acknow- dgments, and adorations to him.

Now though it cannot be denied that there are inſtances ough, both in ſacred and profane writers, where one tenſe y be put for another, and make a great alteration in the ſenſe the words; yet, that in this place there is no neceſſity for ſuch tation, but, on the contrary, a very great one, that the words uld abide in their natural ſignification, is evident from hence; That we can hardly deviſe any reaſon, why our bleſſed Sa- viour ſhould ſo ſtrictly forbid Mary to touch him, becauſe he was not yet aſcended; and yet, that very evening [m] walk, and diſcourſe, and eat with the two diſciples, travelling to Emmaus, and [n] ſhew to the aſſembly of his apoſtles his hands and his feet, deſiring them to handle him; unleſs his firſt aſcenſion was intermediate, and preſently after this interview with Mary." To make this more obvious, we muſt remem- r, that, a little before his paſſion, our Saviour foretold his oſtles his ſudden aſcent to his Father, and as ſudden deſcent to em again: [o] Yet a little while, ſays he, and ye ſhall not ſee , and again a little while, and ye ſhall ſee me; becauſe I go to y Father: and afterwards, upon his diſciples ſurmiſe and diſpu- tion about the meaning of the expreſſion; [p] Jeſus ſaid unto em, Do ye inquire among yourſelves of what I ſaid, a little hile, and ye ſhall not ſee me, and again a little while, and ye all ſee me? Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, that ye ſhall weep d lament, but the world ſhall rejoice; and ye ſhall be ſorrow- l, but your ſorrow ſhall be turned into joy, &c. Now if we mpare this prediction with the event, [q] how ſad and diſcon- late the diſciples were upon our Saviour's death, and how re- freſhed

Arguments for the affirmative.

i Heb. ix. 12. k John xx. 17. l Whitby on John xx. m Luke xxiv. 13.
n Ibid. ver. 39. o John xvi. 16. p Ibid. ver. 19, &c. q Whiſton's Eſſays.

freſhed and joyful they were, ſoon after his reſurrection, and conſider withal, that this ſorrow was to laſt till Chriſt had been with the Father, and then their joy to commence; we ſhall be inclined to believe that what our Lord would be underſtood to ſay, is, that he was to go to his Father immediately after his reſurrection, and then, very ſoon, to return to his apoſtles again, even the very ſame day in the evening.

That Chriſt aſcended the morning of his reſurrection.

AND indeed, conſidering that Chriſt was our high-prieſt, it was neceſſary for him to aſcend into heaven, as ſoon as his ſufferings were finiſhed. [r] For, as the prieſt under the law, was not only to ſlay the ſacrifice, but to carry the blood that moment within the ſanctuary, and there preſent it before God, to complete the atonement, and make interceſſion for the people; ſo Chriſt, having ſhed his blood, and offered his body on the altar of the croſs, was immediately to aſcend into the heavenly ſanctuary, and there obtain for us the remiſſion of our ſins, and all other benefits of his paſſion. Nor is this all. That our Saviour is inveſted with a regal, as well as a ſacerdotal character, is what the ſcriptures teach us, and what [s] we have ſufficiently explained already: but now, [t] if he could not exerciſe any ſupreme authority, until he was exalted to his heavenly kingdom; if he could not [u] give gifts unto men, until he had aſcended on high; nor [x] ſend his Holy Spirit upon his diſciples, until he was glorified, and had, by his interceſſion, [y] obtained that great promiſe of the Father; if he could not, I ſay, adminiſter the affairs of his mediatorial kingdom, until he had conquered death and the devil by his reſurrection, and preſented himſelf, as a ſlain ſacrifice, and propitiation for the ſins of the world, before the preſence of the divine majeſty; then is it evident, that, on the very day of his reſurrection, he muſt have aſcended up to heaven; becauſe, in the evening of that day, we find him [z] giving a commiſſion and inſtruction to his apoſtles; promiſing them the miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt; [a] bleſſing them in a ſolemn manner; [b] ſending them, as his Father had ſent him; [c] giving them the power of remitting and retaining ſins; and afterwards, in Galilee, aſſerting that [d] all power was given him, and that in heaven, as well as earth; and therefore commanding his apoſtles to go, and teach, and baptize all nations, promiſing his powerful preſence with them, till the end of the world. Certainly theſe exerciſes of royal and ſupreme power, according to the ſcripture-account of things, could hardly belong to our Saviour until his exaltation: and if ſo, then have we reaſon to ſuppoſe, that, in the morning of his reſurrection, he aſcended privately up to heaven; and that, in the evening of the ſame day, he likewiſe aſcended viſibly, we have ſtill ſtronger preſumption to believe.

ST MARK

r Whitby on John xx. 17. s Vid. Vol. II. p. 440. t Whiſton, ibid. u Eph. iv. 8. x John vii. 39. y Acts ii. 33. z Mark xvi. 15, &c. a Luke xxiv. 50. b John xx. 21. c Ibid. ver. 23. d Matth. xxviii. 18, &c.

ST MARK, who is the first of the evangelists who makes men- and the
on of any of our Lord's ascensions, having instanced in several evening,
ersons, to whom he had appeared on the day of his resurrec-
on, comes at last to the apostles, and tells us, that [f] afterward
e appeared to the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided
hem with their unbelief, because they believed not them who
ad seen him after he was risen. The very words plainly im-
ly that the apostles had not as yet been assured by their senses,
hich yet, we are told, they were on the evening of his resur-
ection: so that this must be the first interview that passed be-
ween Christ and them; and yet the evangelist informs us, that
ter he had given them some directions concerning their future
eaching of the gospel, &c. [g] he was received up into heaven,
nd sat on the right hand of God, that very same evening, as it
ill appear by what follows. St Luke, who is the next, and
deed the only evangelist besides, who mentions our Lord's
censions at all, [h] having given us the history of his resurrection,
the angels appearing to the women, of the women relating
to the apostles, and of two of the apostles running to the se-
lchre to satisfy themselves, [i] goes on with a more particular
count of the two disciples travelling [k] the very same day to
mmaus; how our Lord appeared and discoursed to them;
ow they came to know him, and in what manner he disap-
eared; whereupon he tells us that [l] they arose the same hour
nd returned to Jerusalem, and came to the assembly of the
ostles, and told them the particulars of what they had just be-
re heard and seen; [m] and as they were speaking of these
ings, Jesus stood in the midst and discoursed with them; and,
soon as his discourse was over, [n] he led them out as far as
ethany, where, while he was blessing them, he was parted
om them, and carried up to heaven. Nothing certainly can
e plainer and more convincing than this narration. Let us
ow see what account it is that the same author gives us of our
aviour's final ascension.

Now the circumstances in which he clothes his account are
ese; [o] when the apostles were come together, they asked
m, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the king-
om to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to
now the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his
wn power; but ye shall receive power, after that the Holy
host is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me,
oth in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto
e uttermost parts of the earth. And when he had spoken
ese things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud
ceived him out of their sight; and, while they looked stedfast

f Mark xvi. 14. g Ibid. ver. 19. h Luke xxiv. 1, &c. i Ibid. ver. 13, &c.
Vid. Luke xxiv. 13. compared with John xx. 19. l Ibid. ver. 33. m Ibid.
r. 36. n Ibid. ver. 50, 51. o Acts i. 6, &c.

toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men ſtood by them in white apparel, which alſo ſaid, Ye men of Galilee, why ſtand ye gazing up into heaven? This ſame Jeſus, which is taken up from you into heaven, ſhall ſo come in like manner as ye have ſeen him go into heaven. Here we may perceive different actions, different diſcourſes, different circumſtances, from what we find in St Luke's goſpel; and therefore can hardly imagine that accounts ſo little alike, wrote by the ſame perſon, can have any manner of relation to one and the ſame event. In his goſpel, the place from whence Chriſt is ſaid to aſcend [p] is Bethany, fourteen furlongs from Jeruſalem; in his book of Acts, [q] Mount Olivet, no more than five. In the goſpel, the company which ſaw him aſcend [r] ſeem to be the apoſtles, and not many more; in the Acts, [s] the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty. No mention is made in the Acts of his lifting up his hands and bleſſing them; no notice is taken in the goſpel of the cloud which received him out of their ſight, or of the two angels which aſſured them that he was to come down, in the laſt day, in the ſame viſible manner that they ſaw him aſcend.

and frequently at other times.

THESE things make it reaſonable to believe that the different relations of St Luke deſcribe two different aſcenſions: And if we can fairly prove two, there is no reaſon why we may not ſuppoſe many more; as many indeed, as his reſidence in heaven, and the neceſſary affair of his inſtructing his apoſtles on earth alternately might require; ſince the diſtance of place, be it what it will (conſidering the power and purity of Chriſt's celeſtial body, to which the divine Spirit is united) can be no manner of objection. But then, if we ſuppoſe [t] with ſome learned men (and as the ſcripture-language in many inſtances gives us reaſon to ſuppoſe) that the place, which we call Heaven, where God's majeſtic preſence appears, and Chriſt's humanity is aſcended, where thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, arch-angels, and angels have their abodes, every one in their ſeveral degrees and orders, is no other than the vaſt expanſion of the air; and that the utmoſt height of this air, as apppears from the beſt obſervations, is but about forty-five or fifty miles from the earth; it will appear no ſtrange thing, that our Lord ſhould aſcend and deſcend more than once, during that forty days interval between his reſurrection and final aſcenſion; which, in ſome meaſure, accounts for the manner, in which was ſpent the intermediate time, whereof the evangeliſts, putting them all together, give us but a ſlender detail.

The matter of our Saviour's diſcourſes after his reſurrection.

THE evangeliſts, however, have acquainted us in general, that the conferences, which he then had with his diſciples, turned chiefly upon theſe two points: 1. His expounding unto them,

p Luke xxiv. 50. q Acts i. 12. r Luke xxiv. 33. s Acts i. 15. t Whiſton's Eſſay

hem, [u] out of the prophets, and all the ſcriptures, the things oncerning himſelf: and * his ſpeaking of the things pertaining o the kingdom of God; and therefore we may not improperly onjecture; 1. What were the moſt material paſſages in the rophets, relating to his paſſion and reſurrection, which Chriſt ight explain to his diſciples. And, 2. What were the moſt aterial topics relating to his kingdom, that he may be ſupoſed to have inſiſted on at this time. The ſcripture indeed as not told us what prophecies our Saviour explained to his iſciples; [x] but I cannot think it unreaſonable to preſume that he diſciples endeavoured to convince others by the ſame ſcripures, to which they owed their own conviction; and therefore uch as we find them, either relating to as quoted from our Saiour before his death, or elſe urging upon the Jews, in their wn perſons afterwards; ſuch I think we may preſume had a lace in our Lord's expoſition; ſince it is not to be doubted, ut that, in the explications of the Old Teſtament, they folowed the interpretation which he had given them.

1. As to the ſufferings and death of Chriſt then, the prohecies produced in ſcripture are ſo very many, that they reach very material circumſtance of them. His being betrayed by a articular friend [y] David foretold, as [z] Jeſus himſelf remarks: hat traitor's miſerable end and loſs of his apoſtleſhip, [a] St Peter as obſerved from [b] the ſame author: the fear and confuſion of is diſciples, [c] our Lord refers to a paſſage in [d] the prophet Zehariah: the infamous manner and profligate companions of his eath, [e] St Mark collects from another [f] in Iſaiah: the barbarity f his enemies in taunting and reviling him even in his dying gonies, [g] St John has produced out of [h] the royal Pſalmiſt: nd the invincible meekneſs and patience wherewith he bore it ll, [i] St Peter has quoted out of the [k] evangelical prophet.

IN like manner, as to the reſurrection of Chriſt, God having romiſed to Abraham that [l] in his ſeed all the nations of the world ſhould be bleſſed; [m] this ſeed St Paul affirms to the Gatians, is Chriſt who redeemed us from the curſe of the law, eing made a curſe for us, that the bleſſing of Abraham might ome upon the Gentiles through Jeſus Chriſt. David, magnifying the mercy of God in his ſon's exaltation to the throne, as theſe words; [n] Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten hee; which † St Paul in his ſermon in the ſynagogue at Anioch, ° applies to Chriſt's reſurrection. The ſame royal prophet,

[u] Luke xxiv. 27. * Acts i. 3. [x] Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels, Vol. II. [y] Pſal. xli. 9. [z] John xiii. 18. [a] Acts i. 16. [b] Pſal. lxix. and cix. [c] Matth. xxvi. 31. [d] Zech. xxiii. 7. [e] Mark xv. 27. [f] Iſa. liii. 12. [g] John xix. [h] Pſal. xxii. [i] 1 Pet. ii. 24. [k] Iſa. liii. [l] Gen. xii. 3. [m] Gal. iii. 13. &c. [n] Pſal. ii. 7. † Acts xiii. 32, 33. ° When the apoſtle applies thoſe words, This day have I begotten thee, to our Saviour's reſurrection, he does but ſpeak the language of the Hebrew writers, who call the earth our mother, the grave her womb, and mens riſing from it being born again: and the Jews, who own that this pſalm belongs to the Meſſiah, have no reaſon to complain that thoſe words ſhould be applied to his reſurrection. Kidder's Demonſtration.

phet, in a rapture of truſt and holy hope, expreſſes himſelf thus; [p] Thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy One to ſee corruption; which [q] St Peter, in his ſermon on the day of Pentecoſt, refers to the ſame purpoſe; and [r] Iſaiah having mentioned the ſure mercies of David, by which is underſtood a ſpiritual and eternal kingdom, [s] St Paul makes the application of them to Chriſt's reſurrection, who is now become a king, and no more to return to corruption.

THESE are ſome of the principal prophecies which relate to our Lord's paſſion and reſurrection, the two great points he was to clear up to his diſciples; and what very probably he made the ſubject of his conferences for the time he was with them after his reſurrection. And, in like manner,

Concerning his church.

2. THE things pertaining to the kingdom of God may not unlikely be reſolved into ſuch topics as theſe—[t] "That ſince he "had choſen them to be witneſſes of his doctrine, death and "reſurrection, they were to preach the goſpel over the face "of the whole earth, and uſe all diligence, that no nation "might be unacquainted with it: that ſuch perſons as liſtened "to their preaching, and were willing to embrace their new "religion, they were to admit into the church by the appointed "form of baptiſm; and ſuch as ſhould chance to fall from "their integrity at any time, and through the deceitfulneſs of "ſin, or violence of any ſudden temptation, be induced to vio-"late their baptiſmal vow; theſe they ſhould renew and con-"firm by the other ſacrament of his ſupper: that the benefits "to ſuch as believed and obeyed their doctrine ſhould be in-"finite; the condemnation to thoſe who ſlighted the kind offers "of God intolerable: that, in executing this their charge, "they were to expect labours and difficulties, perils and perſe-"cutions innumerable; but, in balance to theſe, might depend "on his continual preſence with them, the comforts and ſup-"ports of his bleſſed Spirit, and the almighty hand of God, at-"tending their miniſtry, and enabling them to work all kinds "of miracles in confirmation of it: that through theſe aſſiſ-"tances they ſhould ſee the work of God proſper in their hands; "ſee people of all nations converted to the faith; and when "they themſelves had finiſhed their courſe, ſhould receive the "reward of their labour and fidelity, crowns of glory in the "manſions of bliſs, and live for ever in the joy of their Lord. "In the mean time, wherever the chriſtian religion prevailed, "that there they ſhould ſettle elders in the church; admit "them by a ſolemn and regular ordination; conſecrate a day "in memory of his reſurrection; appoint a liturgy for the help "of public devotion; impoſition of hands for the confirmation "of the adult; cenſures for the vicious; honours for the dili-"gent;

p Pſal. xvi. 10. q Acts ii. 29, &c. r Iſa. lv. 3. s Acts xiii. 34. t Whitby on Acts i. and Barrow on the Creed.

ent; and every thing that the Spirit of truth ſhould direct hem to for the uſe of edifying."

THESE, and ſuch like topics (as they relate to the eſtabliſhnt and good government of his church) ſeem to have made he ſubject of our Saviour's diſcourſes, in the ſeveral times he viſited his diſciples after his reſurrection; all along inixing lectures of comfort and conſolation; promiſes of his ne preſence and protection; and aſſurances of his ſending Holy Ghoſt to be their conſtant guide and counſellor; till g now about to take his final leave of them, he led them to [u] the Mount Olivet, the mount where he had preached prayed, where he was transfigured and crucified ſo lately, there while he was giving inſtructions and imparting benetions to them, St Luke acquaints us * he was taken up into ven, and a cloud received him out of their ſight.

The reality of Chriſt's aſcenſion.

THAT our bleſſed Lord [x] by a true and local, not a ſeeming metaphorical tranſlation, in the ſame humanity which he had earth, with the ſame body which died, and was buried, and raiſed again, and the ſame human ſoul, which by death was rated from his body, and, at his reſurrection, re-united by power of his divine Spirit, did, in the public view of many tators, riſe from the earth, and gradually aſcend to heaven, vident from the teſtimony of thoſe who were preſent at this ſaction: which teſtimony is therefore to be credited, beſe, as we ſhewed in the article of his reſurrection, they were of too good underſtanding to be deceived by themſelves, of too much veracity to impoſe upon others in a matter of ſubmitted to the ſenſes of ſuch a number of witneſſes. ey were the ſame perſons indeed that bore teſtimony of his rrection, but herein it was not ſo neceſſary that they ſhould eye-witneſſes as in the act of his aſcenſion. [y] It was enough hat caſe if they ſaw him whom a little before they knew e dead, alive again; for whatever was a proof of his life r death was a demonſtration of his reſurrection: but ſince y were not to ſee him in heaven, and, by the weakneſs of r eye-ſight, were hindered from beholding his reception and on on high; it was neceſſary, that, for the confirmation of r own and other mens faith in this particular, they ſhould ctual ſpectators of his paſſage and tranſition thither, as far as r eyes would reach; and when theſe could follow him no farther,

St Jerome [de Locis Heb.] and Sulpitius Severus [Hiſt. Sacra Lib. ii.] tell us that the exact print of our Saviour's feet remained in their time, is mountain, not to be effaced; and that over it Helena, the mother of ſtantine the Great, erected a chapel, called the Chapel of Aſcenſion; ewith the modern travellers, not only of the Roman communion, but even contrary perſuaſion (among whom Sandys, in the third book of his Travels, e) do agree, aſſuring us that theſe ſacred footſteps are to be ſeen in that , and not to be obliterated. Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. * Acts x Pearſon on the Creed. y Pearſon, ibid.

farther, [z] then to have the inhabitants of the place come an inform them of the reſt.

The manner of it.

HEAVEN indeed is a term that admits of divers ſignification in holy ſcripture: the lower region under the clouds, th middle region among the clouds, and the higher region abov the clouds, fall all under the ſame denomination; but ſince ou Saviour is ſaid in ſcripture [a] to have been made higher tha the heavens, [b] to have paſſed into the heavens, and [c] aſcende far above the heavens, &c. there is good reaſon why we ſhoul underſtand heaven here in its moſt exalted ſenſe, viz. for tha place where God has choſen to diſcover the immediate an glorious effects of his preſence, the ſeat appointed by him fo the reſidence of angels, and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfec How far diſtant this habitation of the Almighty may be fro this terraqueous globe whereon we live, is above the power aſtronomy to compute or imagine; but let the ſpace be ſup poſed never ſo great, it can be no valid objection againſt th poſſibility of Chriſt's aſcenſion, [d] conſidering the nature of h glorious and ſpiritual body, ſtrong and active, and perfectly ob ſequious to all the motions of the ſoul; conſidering the natur of his glorified ſoul, tending upwards and moving towards hea ven, as its proper centre; and conſidering the union of bo with his divinity, which, as it originally gave, and ſtill continu motion to all bodies, can undoubtedly make them move in wh meaſure and degree of celerity it pleaſes.

With the ſame body.

[e] WITH what peculiar qualities the body of Chriſt whi aſcended is now in its glorified ſtate endowed; whether it ſu ſiſts by any acceſſary renovation of parts; after what mann any loſs or acceſſion of parts happen to it, and of what kind tho parts may be, are queſtions ſavouring of too much ſubtilty be purſued. It ſeems probable, from what St Paul ſays, th [f] fleſh and blood ſhall not inherit the kingdom of heaven (whi relates to our glorified bodies, when we ſhall bear the image the heavenly Adam) [g] that Chriſt's body has no more the m difications of fleſh and blood in it, and that the glory of the c leſtial body is of another nature and texture than that of t terreſtrial. It is eaſy however to imagine how this may b and yet the body remain numerically the ſame: for all matt being uniform, and capable of all ſort of motion, and, by conſ quence, of being either much groſſer or much purer; the ſam portion of matter which made a thick or heavy body here belo though not changed in its eſſential parts, may be ſublimated in ſuch purity and fineneſs, as to be no longer a fit inhabitant f this earth, or in a condition to breathe this air, but meet to tranſlated into the regions above.

HOWEV

z Acts i. 10, 11. a Heb. vii. 26. b Ibid. iv. 14. c Eph. iv. 10. d Edward Body of Divinity, Vol. I. e Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. f 1 C xv. 50. g Burnet on the Articles.

HOWEVER this be, [h] what it principally concerns us to know relation to our Lord's aſcenſion is, that his human ſoul, by a al and true tranſlation, in union with his body, was conveyed m earth through the regions of air to the higheſt heaven, the t and reſidence of divine majeſty; that there, as himſelf exeſſes it, he [i] might prepare a place for us, and take poſſeſſion thoſe celeſtial manſions which he had purchaſed by his meriious paſſion; that, as our [k] advocate, he might preſent our plications, and in our behalf interpoſe his intereſt and autho- at the throne of grace; that, as our king, he might govern in a place where myriads of bright and [l] flaming miniſters ready at all times to obſerve his beck; that, as our royal nefactor, [m] he might diſtribute from thence, at the inaugura- to his ſovereign dignity, [n] the gift of the Holy Ghoſt; and ly, that having [o] finiſhed the work which his Father gave to do, he might in reward of his obedience [p] ſit down at right hand in heavenly places, far above all principalities powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is ned, not only in this world, but in that which is to come.

The ends of his aſcenſion.

SECT. II.

Of CHRIST's Seſſion at GOD's Right Hand.

TO ſit at God's right hand is one of thoſe expreſſions wherein the Holy Ghoſt condeſcends to our capacities, attributing to God the parts and geſtures of an human body. he hand is the chief inſtrument of exerting our ſtrength, therefore often uſed to denote the power of God: the ht hand is the uſual place of honour and reſpect, and there- this denotes the higheſt dignity; and, as the moſt ho- rable upon earth are diſtinguiſhed by neareſt approaches to perſon of the king, ſo it was the ambition of the ſons of bedee, [r] to ſit one on Chriſt's right hand, and the other on left, in his kingdom. In like manner by ſitting, in the caſe ore us, is not intended any poſture of the body, but the ngs uſually implied by that poſture. Thus the prophet inti- es the profound peace and tranquillity of his people, by pro- ing that they ſhould ſit every man under his own vine: in logy to which, our Saviour is ſaid to ſit down at the right d of God, as he now hath ceaſed from the labours and ſuf- ings undergone [s] in the days of his fleſh, and enjoys perfect oſe and happineſs with his Father in heaven. Sitting again, lies continuance in the ſame place, from whence the tribes, oſe lot, in the diviſion of the land, fell out ſo, are ſaid [t] to ſit

Chriſt's ſeſſion.

The meaning of it.

Fidde's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. i John xiv. 2. k 1 John ii. 1. l Heb. 4. m Eph. iv. 10. n John xvi. 7. o Ibid. xvii. 4. p Eph. i. 20. q Stan- e on the Epiſtles and Goſpels, Vol. III. and Pearſon on the Creed. r Matth. 21. s Heb. v. 7. t Judg. v. 17.

ſit by the ſea-ſhore: and thus our Saviour's ſitting at God's right hand denotes his conſtant abode in thoſe regions of bliſs and glory; or, in the words of St Peter, [u] that the heaven muſt receive him until the times of reſtitution, or final conſummation of all things. Sitting, once more imports authority and dominion; hence kings are repreſented in this poſture on their thrones, and magiſtrates uſe it in courts of juſtice: and for this reaſon * more eſpecially, Chriſt is deſcribed ſitting on the right hand of God, to intimate that mediatorial kingdom and power which he is to exerciſe until the great day of judgment be paſſed and [x] then ſhall he deliver the kingdom to God, even the Father. According to this interpretation of the words, Chriſt's ſitting at God's right hand muſt denote—"That the ſame bliſs, and glo" "ry, and power, which the Son of God did, before his incar" "nation, enjoy with his Father from all eternity, his human" "nature is made partaker of, in the higheſt heavens: that this" "God-man is inveſted with an abſolute authority, and boundleſs dominion, and does now, in both natures, rule, as he" "ſhall one day judge the whole world." [y] For all power is given to him both in heaven and earth, [z] *i. e.* God hath committed the government of the world into his hands, for the benefit and advantage of his church in this life, and for the diſpenſing of rewards and puniſhments to good and bad men in the next.

The truth of it.

[a] THE apoſtles indeed could not be witneſſes of this the Lord's advancement and exaltation at the right hand of God; but ſtill they had, and ſo have we, ſufficient aſſurance of it, both by what our Saviour declared before his aſcenſion, and by the effects which followed after. Before he aſcended, he told them whither he was going, what power and dignity would be conferred upon him; and that, as an evidence of ſuch power and dignity, he would, in a few days, ſend down the Holy Ghoſt upon them in a ſenſible manner, and in great and ſenſible effects, enable them to ſpeak with tongues, and to work all ſorts of miracles. After this he was, in their ſight, taken up from them, and carried towards heaven; and ten days after, the Holy Ghoſt, according to his promiſe, came down upon them in miraculous powers and gifts. So that here was abundant evidence to them of his exaltation in heaven, they having ſeen him taken up and carried thitherward, and after this, finding the wonderful effects of his being there, and of the power which was conferred upon him. And to confirm our faith ſtill more and more, the infallible records acquaint us, [b] that the bleſſed martyr St Stephen, while he was on earth, ſaw the heavens open, and Jeſus ſtanding at the right hand of God; even as

Part

u Acts iii. 21. * Vid. King's Critical Hiſtory of the Creed, p. 279. x 1. Cor. xv. 24. y Matth. xxviii. 18. z Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. III. a Tillotſon ibid. b Acts vii. 55.

ul and St John saw him enthroned in his heavenly majesty, ough they themselves were not entered into glory. Such is e nature and evidence of Christ's exaltation: And hence,

1. WE cannot but observe and admire the wonderful wisdom d equity of God in receiving the human nature of his blessed n to his right hand in heaven. [c] It is indeed a most glorious ivilege for flesh and blood to sit in heavenly places: but when e remember that this was the flesh and blood which the eter- l Son of God condescended to honour with his personal resi- nce; that in this he laboured under all the wants and infirmi- s, the contumelious treatment and bitter agonies, which he omitted to, but could not undergo, except as man; we then y easily discern great reason for a recompence as extraordi- ry as the sufferings had been; and cannot suppose any amends o much for such exquisite tortures and barbarous indignities. no sorrow was like unto his sorrow, so was no joy ever so l, no honour ever so high and excellent; for, [d] being found fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God hath ghly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every me, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of ings in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the rth: and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ Lord, to the glory of God the Father. So that the scandal the cross is effectually removed, by seating the body crucified on the throne on high, and constituting that once mock-king, d supposed malefactor, the Lord and Judge of the whole rth. Hence,

What we may observe from Christ's exaltation.

God's justice.

2. WE cannot but observe the assurance God hath given us, relation to the happiness we hope for in the next world. No igion ever gave man so sensible a demonstration of a future , and blessed immortality hereafter, as the christian religion th done, by the resurrection of our blessed Lord from the ad, and his visible ascension into heaven: [e] the reasonings philosophers concerning the immortality of the soul, and a ture state after this life, besides the uncertainty of them, have o this disadvantage, that they are only calculated for the more ined and speculative part of mankind; but every man is ca- ble of the force of this argument,—That he who published d declared to the world another life after this, and the happy ndition of good men in it, was himself raised from the dead, d visibly taken up into heaven; from whence the inference is vious, that God will, in like manner, raise and advance us to ry and happiness, if so be we take care to prepare ourselves it; because this ascent and advancement of Christ is to be nsidered, not merely as a private and personal advantage, but as

A future state of happiness.

[c] Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. III. [d] Phil. ii. 8. [e] Tillotson's mons, Vol. III.

a thing performed under that public character which he ſuſtained in the quality of our great high-prieſt. To this purpoſe the author to the Hebrews, in alluſion to the ſacerdotal office, tells us that he is entered into the holy place, [f] to appear in the preſence of God for us, and that [g] he is entered for us within the vail, as our forerunner. Now a forerunner is a relative term, and of neceſſity implies ſome perſons following behind; and therefore his meaning muſt be, that Chriſt, by entering in to heaven before us, has in our nature taken poſſeſſion of the manſions of bliſs, not for himſelf only, but for all good chriſtians that ſhall come after him. For which reaſon the great apoſtle St. Paul, by way of anticipation, concludes good chriſtians already poſſeſſed of what their proxy enjoys; for this is the tenor of his argument: As [h] God hath quickened us together with Chriſt, and has raiſed us up together, by virtue of his reſurrection; ſo hath he, by virtue of his glorification, made us ſit together with him in heavenly places, that, in the ages to come, he might ſhew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindneſs to us, through Jeſus Chriſt. Hence,

Comfort in troubles.

3. WE cannot but obſerve, of what great comfort and encouragement it is in all the trials and afflictions that can befal us to conſider that we are under the patronage and protection of one who ſits at the right hand of God; who, highly exalted though he be, is nearly related to us, and has that nature about him, in which he ſuffered more than any of us can do, and from the experience of his own ſufferings, retains ſtill a quick ſenſe of the frailties and infirmities of mortality. Do we then ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake? * Seeing we have an high-prieſt, that is now paſſed into heaven, but was once tempted in all points like as we are, let us hold faſt our profeſſion without wavering, being fully perſuaded, [i] that if we die with him, we ſhall alſo live with him, and if we ſuffer with him, we ſhall alſo reign with him. Are we diſquieted for the loſs or want of the good things of this life? [k] The iſſues of providence, and the diſpenſation of the bleſſings of God are repoſited in our Saviour's hands, who knoweth that we have need of theſe things, and therefore, if they would conduce to his glory and our welfare, we may be ſatisfied he would not detain them from us; and that, if he does, he with-holds them for our good, and has better things abundantly in reſerve for us. Are we uneaſy at the apprehenſions of death? The conſideration that our gracious Lord [l] is gone before, to prepare a place for us, that where he is, we may be alſo; and that, while we are detained in the body, we are abſent from him, [m] in whoſe preſence is fulneſs of joy, and at whoſe right hand are pleaſures for evermore, enough

f Heb. ix. 24. g Ibid. vi. 19, 20. h Eph. ii. 5, &c. * Heb. iv. 14, &c.
i 2 Tim. ii. 12. k Les Oeuvres poſth. de M. Claude, Tom. III. l John xiv. 2.
m Pſal. xvi. 11.

ough to out-balance the reluctance of nature, and make a
e man even desire to die. Are we fearful, and in danger of
ing by the weight of temptations that we see coming upon
? He that sitteth on high, was more than once in the same
umstances, [n] and in that himself hath suffered, being tempt-
he is able to succour them that are tempted. In a word,
our trials and afflictions what they will, yet the triumph of
champion over all our enemies, the great advancement of
nature in him, and the transporting satisfaction of having
good a friend in so high a place, and in so great power, on
ose help we may depend, and under whose patronage we may
secure, in every state, at all times, and in all places, is enough
pacify our minds, and to put in practice that wise and salutary
vice of the apostle; [o] Be careful for nothing; but in every
ng, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your
uests be made known unto God. Hence,

4. LASTLY, we cannot but observe the great obligation we all under, both as men and christians, [p] to set our affection, not things on the earth, but on things in heaven, since our na-e and our Saviour both are ascended thither. [q] A carnal sen-l life, that is wholly immersed in earthly concerns, and intends farther acquest than the good things of this world, is evi-ntly the greatest contradiction to the exaltation of our nature h Christ in heaven: for if humanity be raised, how can they said to live like men now, who are lost in sense, and buried the sink of brutal pleasures? And if Christ be ascended, and on God's right hand in heaven, how can they be said to be followers who are still wandering and bewildering themselves, the fartheſt distance from him on earth, where he is not; d will not so much as lift up an eye after him to heaven, ere he is? Let us then remember that our Lord and leader gone far above out of our sight; that we are still able to fol-v him with the eye of faith; that our true blessedness consists being with him; that our main concern lies in another coun-; and that the affairs of this, in which we now sojourn, are owed, in some measure, to employ our pains, but, by no ans, must engross our affections; and, in the strength of this rsuasion, let us in heart and mind ascend to him, and with him stantly dwell, [r] using this world as not abusing it, for the hion of this world passeth away.

The necessity of heavenly-mindedness.

CHAP.

n Heb. ii. 18. o Phil. iv. 6. p Col. iii. 2. q Newcome's Sermons, Vol. I.
Cor. vii. 31.

CHAP. IV.

Our JESUS the true Meſſias.

The word Meſſias, what it means.

WE have hitherto followed our bleſſed Saviour through the different ſtages of his life, from the time of his conception and birth, to that of his aſcenſion into heaven, and exaltation to the right hand of God; and ſhall now look into the ſacred records, in order to perceive whether the ſtate and condition in which he appeared, his perſonal qualities and performances, what he did, ſuffered, and received, be agreeable to the characters which the prophets gave of that great and eminent perſon who was to come into the world; and conſequently, whether this Jeſus of Nazareth, to whom we have given up our names in baptiſm, whom the Jews indeed crucified, but whom we rely on for the ſalvation of our ſouls, was in reality the promiſed Meſſias. Only, before we come to that, we would briefly obſerve that the word Meſſias, which, in Greek, is rendered Chriſt, ſtrictly ſignifies the ſame with Anointed, and here properly denotes a perſon ſet a part and conſecrated to ſome great office and employment. [a] For, in the Eaſtern countries, which abounded with oil and odoriferous ſpices, the cuſtom was to anoint with an ointment, compoſed of theſe ingredients, the perſons appointed to ſuch high offices, as is evident in the caſe of kings, and prieſts, if not prophets, among the Jews. This was probably done to ſignify the plentiful effuſion of gifts and graces, neceſſary to qualify them for their employment, as well as the good and beneficial effects which the office they were advanced to, might enable them to diſpenſe. [b] Upon theſe occaſions the cuſtom of anointing was ſo general, that, in alluſion thereunto, perſons appointed by God to any eminent office and employment, are often ſaid to be the Lord's anointed, even though they were not conſecrated by any material unction: for ſo is [c] Cyrus ſtiled, whom God ordained for the deſtruction of Babylon, and the reſtoration of Iſrael; and ſo is Jeſus, [d] whom God anointed with the Holy Ghoſt, whereof the oil was but a faint type and ſhadow, and with power, enabling him to perform the high charge and office whereunto he had appointed him.

THE word Meſſias or Chriſt therefore denotes a perſon, in a ſignal and ſpecial manner, ordained and appointed by God to ſome great charge or function; whoſe qualities and performances were to be extraordinary, and highly beneficial to mankind. And in order to prove that Jeſus of Nazareth, the Saviour in whom we truſt, was this extraordinary perſon, we ſhall endeavour to ſhew from the ſacred writings,

I. THAT

a Barrow's Works, Vol III. b Kidder's Demonſtration. c Iſa. xlv. 1, &c. d Acts x. 38.

. THAT God had all along promiſed a Meſſias to the world, under what characters he deſcribed him.

I. THAT, at the time of our Saviour's coming into the ld, the expectation of the Meſſias was univerſal.

II. THAT the time within which the Meſſias was to come ng ſince elapſed; and,

V. THAT, by all concurrent ſigns and characters, our Jeſus e true Meſſias.

. [e] THAT there are, in the Old Teſtament, many intima- s, and ſome direct prophecies and predictions that all the t promiſes of God, made to his true worſhippers, ſhould ive their final accompliſhment, by means of a particular per- anointed of God for that purpoſe, and who, after the re- tion of all adverſaries, ſhould ſet up an everlaſting kingdom; hat any common reader cannot but obſerve, [f] The ſeed of woman, which was to bruiſe the ſerpent's head, and [h] the l of Abraham, in which all the nations of the earth were to bleſſed, might originally be underſtood to ſignify, what [i] St l afterwards aſſerts they did, in the ſingular ſenſe, a parti- r perſon; as well as in the plural, a number of perſons. [k] Shiloh, which was to come, and to whom the gathering he people was to be, muſt naturally denote a ſingle perſon, o was to reign, and (by the gradation of the words in the) of a character ſomewhat ſuperior to that of a ſceptre, and w-giver. The words of Balaam, [l] I ſhall ſee him, but not y, I ſhall behold him, but not nigh; there ſhall come a ſtar of Jacob, and a ſceptre ſhall riſe out of Iſrael, are put in his th to deſcribe very obviouſly a greater perſon than one o ſhould ſmite the corners of Moab, and deſtroy all the chil- n of Seth. The words of Moſes, [m] The Lord thy God will e up unto thee a prophet, from the midſt of thee, like unto ; unto him ſhalt thou hearken; and it ſhall come to paſs, whoſoever will not hearken to my words, which he ſhall ak in my name, I will require it of him; plainly deſcribe a y extraordinary prophet, ſome time to come, who ſhould re- ble Moſes; and conſequently accompliſh high deſigns, reveal d's will, promulge a new law, and eſtabliſh a new covenant. e words of Iſaiah, [n] Unto us a child is born, unto us a ſon is en, and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulders, and his e ſhall be called Wonderful, Counſellor, the Mighty God, everlaſting Father, the Prince of Peace: of the increaſe of government and peace there ſhall be no end; upon the one of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to bliſh it with judgment, and with juſtice from henceforth, n for ever: thoſe of Jeremiah, [o] I will raiſe unto David a righteous

Scripture-promiſes and characters of the Meſſias.

Clarke's Evidence of Natural and Revealed Religion. g Gen. iii. 15. d. xii. 3. i Gal. iii. 16. k Gen. xlix. 10. l Numb. xxiv. 17, &c. eut. xviii. 15, 18, 19. n Iſa. ix. 6, &c. o Jer. xxiii. 5, &c.

righteous branch, and a king ſhall reign and proſper, and ſhall execute judgment and juſtice; and this is the name whereby he ſhall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS; and thoſe of Daniel, [p] I ſaw in the night-viſions, and behold, one like the [q] Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Antient of days, and there was given unto him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; that all people, and nations, and languages ſhould ſerve him: his dominion is an everlaſting dominion, which ſhall not paſs away, and his kingdom, that which ſhall not be deſtroyed: all theſe paſſages, I ſay, do plainly denote that this illuſtrious perſon ſhould be a mighty prince and governor, [r] whoſe dominion, as Zechary deſcribes it, ſhould be from ſea even to ſea, and from the river even unto the ends of the earth; and who is called by David, [s] the Everlaſting prieſt; by Ezekiel, [t] the One Shepherd; by Haggai, [u] the Deſire of all Nations; by Malachi, * the Meſſenger of the Covenant; and in another place of Daniel expreſsly, [x] the Meſſiah the Prince.

That at the time of our Saviour's coming, he was expected by the Jews,

II. THESE are ſome of the predictions and promiſes, which God was pleaſed to make in ſcripture, of an extraordinary perſon, inveſted with great power and authority, and who, in the exerciſe of it, was to give a general bleſſing to mankind, whom the prophets diſtinguiſhed by a variety of appellations, which the Jews have compriſed in the general ſtile of Chriſt, or Meſſias: and that, under this name and notion, they expected a perſon, at the time of our Saviour's coming, who ſhould be endowed with qualities, and perform actions ſuitable to the character, whereby he is deſcribed, is manifeſt from the woman of Samaria's ready reply, [y] I know that the Meſſiah cometh, and when he cometh, he will teach us all things; from the [z] peoples expecting, and muſing in their hearts of John, whether he was the Chriſt or not; and their deputing, from their ſanhedrim, [a] ſome prieſts and Levites, to go and inquire of him concerning this matter: is manifeſt, from [b] the peoples thinking, when they ſaw our Saviour's works, that the kingdom of God would immediately appear; from their queſtioning among themſelves, [c] When Chriſt comes, ſhall he do greater miracles than this man has done? And at another time, openly declaring, [d] this is in truth the prophet who was to come into the world: is manifeſt, laſtly, from the great jealouſy, which Herod had concerning the king of the Jews, who was expected to be born about that time; and from the remarkable teſtimony of [e] Joſephus, who tells us, that the chief thing, which incited the Jews to rebel againſt the Romans, was a doubtful prophecy, as he calls it, found in the holy

p Dan vii. 13, &c. q With reference to this it is, that Chriſt in the goſpel perpetually ſtiles himſelf the Son of Man, and once the Son of Man, which is in (which in the prophecy is deſcribed as coming in the clouds of) heaven. John iii. 13. r Zech. ix. 10. s Pſal. cx. 4. t Ezek. xxxiv. 23. u Haggai ii. 7. * Mal. iii. 1. x Dan. ix. 25. y John iv. 25. z Luke iii. 15. a John i. 19. b Luke xvii. 20. c John vii. 31. d Ibid. vi. 14. e De Bello Jud.

ly ſcriptures, that about that time, a great prince ſhould be rn among them, who was to be monarch of the whole world. owever this be, it is certain, that from this general expecta-n, f falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets, in abundance, took occa-n to deceive the people, who were eaſy enough to be deluded, and

f It may not be amiſs in this place, to make mention of ſome of the falſe riſts, againſt whom our Saviour [Matth. xxiv. 24, &c.] cautions his follow-, who, in different ages of the world, aſſumed that character, and impoſed on the people; in order to ſhew the reader the ſucceſſion of deluſion in the ws. The two, whom we read of in ſcripture, before our Saviour's appear-ce, were Theudas, and Judas of Galilee, who drew ſome people after them, t were ſoon both ſlain, and all, as many as obeyed them, were ſcattered, and ought to nought, Acts v. 36. 37. Joſephus [Antiq. L. XXVIII. c. vii.] about t time, mentions another, who led the Jews into the wilderneſs, and pro-ſed them deliverance, but was deſtroyed by Feſtus, together with all his llowers. About forty years after the birth of Chriſt, two brothers, Aſinœus d Avileus, both weavers, had mighty ſucceſs, but were at laſt deſtroyed, d occaſioned the ruin of many of their followers; and, about ſeventy-four ars after that, another weaver, named Jonathan, led many Jews after him o the wilderneſs, but was taken, and burnt alive, and multitudes of the Jews aſſacred about Cyrene. In the reign of Trajan, A. C. 114, the Jews ſet up e Andrew, who occaſioned the deſtruction of many thouſands of them; and the reign of Adrian, another, whom they called, Bar Cochab, i. e. the Son a ſtar, alluding to the ſtar of Jacob, Numb. xxiv. 17. But, when they ſcovered the impoſture, they changed his name to Bar Coſibah, i. e. the Son a Lie. In the reign of Theodoſius the Younger, A. C. 434, another falſe riſt aroſe in the iſland of Crete, pretending that he was ſent from heaven to rry the Jews off that iſland on dry ground through the ſea, and thereupon rſuaded ſeveral to throw themſelves in. In 520, another called Dunaan, oſe in Arabia, and, with the Jews, who followed him, ſet upon the biſhops d chriſtians in the city of Negroe, and committed great outrages, till he was ſtroyed. In 529, the Jews and Samaritans in Paleſtine were ſeduced into bellion by one Julian, a falſe Meſſias, which occaſioned the deſtruction of any of them. In 620, when Mahomet appeared, as he at firſt pretended to the Meſſias, the Jews flocked to him; till, as ſome ſay, they ſaw him eat mel's blood, and upon that account forſook him. In 721, they followed a rtain Syrian, who ſaid he was Chriſt. In 1137, they followed another in ance, which occaſioned their baniſhment from that country. In 1138, they ok up arms with another in Perſia, which brought great miſchief upon them. 1157, they made an inſurrection with another in Spain, and had almoſt all en cut off. In 1167, they ſuffered very much under another in the kingdom Fez; and in the ſame year, under another in Arabia, who gave for a ſign, at after his head was cut off by the king of Arabia, he would riſe to life ain, by which fiction he eſcaped a more cruel death. About the year 1174, other aroſe in Perſia, and led the Jews into rebellion, which occaſioned eat deſtruction among them; and about 1199, another famous one, called avid el David, alias David Alroi, who was a great magician, and deluded any Jews. In 1222, many of them followed a falſe Chriſt in Germany, whom ey called the Son of David; and the ſame year expected their Meſſias to be rn of a woman, then with child at Worms, but it proved a girl. In 1465, hen the Saracens made ſuch inroads upon Chriſtendom, the Jews thought eir Meſſias was coming to fight their battles; and the ſame year, R. Abraham venaris, a Jewiſh aſtrologer, from the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in e ſign Piſces, foretold the coming of their Meſſias to be at hand. In 1497, e Jews were deceived by Iſhmael Sophus, who having got together an army f vile and profligate men, gained many victories, but at laſt cheated them, d ſet up a new ſect for Mahomet. In 1503, R. Aſcher Lemla appeared in ermany, pretending that he was the Meſſiah's forerunner, who, he promiſed ould come and reſtore the Jews to the land of Canaan that ſame year. In 534, a new Meſſias aroſe in Spain, who was burnt by Charles V. The ſame year,

and to be drawn into ruin, upon the perſuaſion, that their Meſſias, and univerſal King, their Reſtorer, and wonderful Deliverer was then to appear in the world.

and Gentiles.

NOR was this the expectation of the Jewiſh nation only, but even among heathens, the notion did prevail, that ſome great and extraordinary perſon was to appear in the world, in that age, wherein our Saviour lived. For, beſides the authorities of Suetonius and Tacitus, which we had occaſion to produce before, the oracles of the Sibyls, which were kept among the archives at Rome, plainly foretold the coming of Chriſt, and pointed out the very time, which made the Romans have a watchful eye upon the Jews. The ſame year that Pompey took Jeruſalem, one of theſe oracles, viz. that nature was about to bring forth a king to the Romans, made ſo great a noiſe, and terrified the ſenate ſo, that they made a decree, [g] that none, who were born that year, ſhould be brought up; but, by the intereſt of thoſe great men, whoſe wives were then with child, and there upon applied the prophecy to themſelves, the decree was hindered from being made public. Virgil [h] in the famous IVth Eclogue wrote about the beginning of Herod the Great, compliments the conſul Pollio with his prophecy, by ſuppoſing it might refer to his ſon Salonius, then newly born; but the words are too great to be verified in mere mortal man; the golden age, and renovation of all things cannot be fulfilled in the reign of any earthly king; and therefore we may obſerve, that the poet expreſſes it, almoſt in the very words [i] of the holy ſcriptures wherein they tell of the glorious age of the Meſſias, of new heavens, and a new earth, then to begin, and to be finally completed at the end of the world. After this, he runs a diviſion upon the peaceable ſtate of that reign, which is perfectly a paraphraſe [k] upon part of that chapter of Iſaiah, where the wol

year, another at Mantua, who came to life again, as many of the Jews believed, after he was burnt. In 1615, another Pſeudo Meſſias appeared in the Eaſt Indies, and was followed by the Portugueze Jews. In 1624, another in Holland. In 1666, a famous one, called Sabethai Zevi, who after all the expectation of the people of the Jews, turned at laſt Mahometan to ſave his life; and no longer ago than 1682, another named R. Mardochai, a German Jew, whom all the Jews in Italy, and many in Germany owned, but like wiſe men, they concealed it, with due reſpect to the inquiſition, and ſelf-preſervation. Thus the Jews have been perpetually ſetting up falſe Meſſiahs, one after another, from the time of our Saviour's coming, even to our days; which is enough, one would think, after ſo many diſappointments, to make them bethink themſelves. Vid. Kidder's Demonſtration, and Leſlie's Short Method with the Jews.

g Suetonius, in Vita Auguſt.

h Ultima cumei venit jam carminis ætas,
Magnus ab integro ſæc'lorum nacitur ordo;
Jam nova progenies cœlo dimittitur alto——
Tu modo naſcenti puero, quo ferrea primum
Deſinat, & toto ſurgit gens aurea mundo. VIRG. Ec. IV.

i Iſa. lxv. 17. 2 Pet. iii. 13.

k Iſa. xi. 6. ——Non magnos metuent armenta Leones,
Occidet & ſerpens, & fallax herba veneni
Occidet - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Ibid.

o dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the , and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; d where all noxious animals are no longer to hurt or deſtroy, all God's holy mountains. So univerſal was the expectation, h in Jews and Gentiles; of ſome great and wonderful perſon to me into the world, in the age when our Saviour appeared; and, III. THAT the time of his coming is long ſince paſt, we ſhall w endeavour to evince, by ſuch marks and diſcoveries, as the ly ſcriptures furniſh us with.

1. In the words of Jacob, we have a notable prediction of the e, when the Meſſias was to come: [l] The ſceptre ſhall not part from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until iloh come; and unto him ſhall the gathering of the people be. eſe words we had occaſion to explain before, but for the eſent uſe and purpoſe of them, we deſire it may be conſidered, hat the firſt promiſe of the Meſſias was made to Adam, as he ſeed of the woman, which ſhould break the ſerpent's head, d from thence derived to Shem, the ſon of Noah, Japhet and m being paſſed by; that from Shem it was deduced to Abra- m, the other ſons of Terah not being conſidered; that from raham it was conveyed to Iſaac, Eſau being omitted; and from n to Jacob, the author of this prediction; who, being now out to leave the world, called his ſons, and bleſſed them, and the prophetic ſpirit, that was then upon him, told them ſe- al things which ſhould happen in the laſt days; and, among ers, when Shiloh, who is the Meſſias, (according to • the ient Jews themſelves) and who was to deſcend from the tribe Judah, ſhould come, viz. before the Jews ſhould become a quered nation, deprived of all rule and authority of their n, and ſubjected to a foreign yoke. Since then it is acknow-

l Gen. xlix. 10. m Kidder's Demonſtration. n Gen. iii. 15.

The Chaldee, and antient Jewiſh interpreters did always underſtand it in ſenſe: but the ſceptre being long ſince departed from Judah, and no other ſias come, but our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to whom the gathering of the nations Gentiles has been, the Rabbies of the Jews have, ſince his coming, ſtrained r wits to invent ſalvos, and evaſions for this prophecy. Some of them ſay, by Shiloh here, was not meant the Meſſias, but Moſes; while others, main- , that it was the tabernacle at Shiloh. Others allowing it to be meant of Meſſias, have ſuppoſed the ſceptre to be a rod, not of rule, but of correction, ch ſhould not depart from Judah, until the Meſſias came; whilſt others not ng this, allow it to be a ſceptre of government, but then they turn it this way, that the ſceptre ſhould not finally, or for ever, depart from Judah, becauſe Meſſias ſhould come, that is, to reſtore it: but this being an alteration, er than an expoſition of the text, others have adventured upon a bolder to ſatisfy it, viz. by affirming, that the ſceptre or dominion is not yet de- ed, i. e. not totally gone, becauſe ſome of the tribe of Judah have, ſome re or other, ſome ſhare or other of government or juriſdiction, more or at leaſt, that ſome of the preſent potentates of the world have, one way ther, deſcended from that tribe, though it may not be known how. But e pretences need no diſproving: they carry guilt in their face, and, being ontradictory to one another, ſhew to what confuſion the Jews are brought, rcing their way through the plain predictions of the Meſſias. Leſlies ſhort hod with the Jews.

ledged, that by Shiloh we are to underſtand the Meſſias, and that God, by the mouth of the patriarch, promiſed, that the government of Iſrael ſhould not fail, until Shiloh came; the government of Iſrael having now manifeſtly failed, and there being not one country in the world, where the Jews are either a kingdom, or republic, or body politic, it inevitably follows that the Meſſias is already come.

2. THE words of the angel Gabriel, in the prophet Daniel, [p] are more particular in this affair; for therein he names the Meſſias the Prince, and fixes the time of his appearing. [q] Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finiſh the tranſgreſſion, and to make an end of ſins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs, and to ſeal up the viſion and prophecy, and to anoint the moſt Holy, &c. We have before explained this prophecy at large, and upon this occaſion, need only take notice, [r] that Daniel, computing that the ſeventy years of Judah's captivity, which were foretold by the prophet Jeremiah, were now drawing to an end, earneſtly prayed to God, to grant his people a reſtoration to their native land: whereupon he is aſſured in a viſion, not only of a temporal deliverance from the Babyloniſh captivity, but of a much greater redemption from their ſpiritual bondage under ſin and Satan, which God would vouchſafe them by the hands of the Meſſiah their Prince, in ſuch a determinate time. For if, according to the prophetic computation, we reckon each day of theſe weeks for a year, the term of ſeventy weeks will juſt amount to four hundred and ninety years; which, commencing at the time when the commandment, or decree was given Ezra to reſtore, and rebuild Jeruſalem (and this was given in the ſeventh year of Artaxerxes) muſt have expired many hundred years ago, and, according to the beſt calculation, much about the time when Jeſus of Nazareth was cut off, not for himſelf, but to finiſh the tranſgreſſion, and make an end of ſin, and a reconciliation for iniquity, as the angel expreſſes the bleſſed effects of his meritorious paſſion.

3. THE

p This prophecy comes ſo cloſe to the point, that the modern Jews, to avoid it, would endeavour to diſcredit the whole book of Daniel. For, about an hundred years after Chriſt, making a new diſtinction of the books of the Old Teſtament into *hagiographa*, or holy writings, and inſpired and canonical ſcriptures, they thruſt down the book of Daniel into this claſs, at the end of the prophets, which before was placed in the middle of them. It is to be obſerved however, that if this book of Daniel be not inſpired in the higheſt degree, it cannot ſtand among the number of holy writings, but muſt be accounted falſe and blaſphemous; becauſe it all along ſpeaks of itſelf as immediately inſpired by God: and if thoſe viſions and revelations, here related, be not true, then is it telling of lies in the name of the Lord, which is the height of blaſphemy. Since therefore the modern Jews dare not place the book of Daniel lower, than among the holy and pious writings, they confeſs it to be inſpired and canonical, and have only diſcovered their own guilt, by endeavouring to decline the teſtimony of their own prophets from our Meſſias. Leſlie's ſhort method with the Jews.

q Dan. ix. 24, &c. r Prideaux's Connection.

3. THE prophet Haggai is still more express upon the subject the Messiah's coming, [s] and limits it to a time, wherein we not be mistaken. I will shake all nations, and the desire of nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith e Lord of Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine; e glory of this latter house shall be greater, than that of the rmer, saith the Lord of Hosts. This prophecy likewise we ve explained before; and for the present therefore need only serve, that as the former temple was much more illustrious, not only for its riches and magnificence of building, but for e many great tokens of God's special favour (whereof we have de mention elsewhere) the latter temple could not possibly excel in any other respect, but this,—That during its standing, the essias, here called the Delight of all Nations, should appear, d honour the place more by his presence in it, than all those her things did, which were but types and shadows of him, who was to be the brightness of his Father's glory, the express age of his person, and, [t] in whom the fulness of his Godhead s to dwell bodily. Since therefore the second temple, so far erior to the former, both in external ornaments, and signal nifestation of the divine grace and power in it, was, accord- to God's promise and prediction, to become more glorious an the other, which could only arise from the personal ap- arance of the Messias in it; the Messias must necessarily appear fore the destruction of this second temple happened: and since e destruction of it is now considerably more than sixteen hun- ed years ago, the coming of the Messias cannot be of later te, how much soever it may be sooner.

THUS it appears, that, within the compass of Daniel's weeks, d during the standing of the second temple, and before the wish polity was quite dissolved, which all seem to point at one and

An objection of the Jews.

[s] Some modern Jews, to avoid the force of this prophecy, pretend that the ter house is not to be meant of the second temple, but of some other, to be lt hereafter. But this is the most extravagant conceit imaginable, incon- ent with the context, with the letter, and plain meaning of the text, with purpose of the prophet, and, in truth, with common sense. For, that the phet, when speaking of an house that was building, and encouraging the ws to go on with it, should affirm, that by this house is meant an house reafter to be built, is a thing incongruous and incredible. See Leslie, ibid. hers tell us, that the glory of the second house was greater than that of the t, because it continued longer. Solomon's temple, say they, continued t 410 years, before it was destroyed by the Babylonians; but this second mple stood 420, before it was destroyed by the Romans; upon which count the glory of this latter house was greater. But is the continuance of years so mighty a thing? Will this make a compensation for the defect above- ntioned? Does God say, he will shake the heaven and the earth for this y? Is this all that he designs and promises, when he says, I will fill s house with glory? If the bare continuance of a few years longer be such addition of glory, the tabernacle of Moses was more glorious than the tem- of Solomon; and if the people of the land could not know, how much temple they were building, was to stand longer than Solomon's did, which y could not know without a particular prophecy, this never could have en used as an encouragement for their vigorous prosecution of the work. dder's Demonstration, Part III. [t] Kidder, ibid. [u] Heb. i. 3. [v] Col. ii. 9.

and the ſame time, the Meſſias was to come, if we may rely o
the promiſes of God: "But theſe promiſes, may the Jews ſa
"are not abſolute, but conditional: they depend upon the tem
"per and diſpoſition of the perſons to whom they are made
"If they deſerve them, they ſhall be fulfilled in due time; bu
"if they are found unworthy of them, they ſhall be delayed
"Now though God has promiſed indeed to ſend us the Meſſia
"at the time appointed by theſe predictions; yet it is upo
"condition, that we deſerve ſuch an ineſtimable bleſſing; where
"as our back-ſlidings have been ſo many, and our iniquities ſ
"grievous, that we muſt charge it upon our guilty ſelves, an
"not any breach of the divine promiſes, that the gift of God i
"retarded, and this long-expected Son of David has not ye
"made his appearance."

Anſwered. * In the xxviiith chapter of Jeremiah, we have, in ſom
meaſure, a rule laid down, whereby we may judge of the truth
of a prophecy, wherein the good or evil of any people is con
cerned. Hananiah, the ſon of Azur, propheſied good concern
ing the people of Iſrael, and a ſpeedy deliverance from thei
captivity in Babylon: but Jeremiah, having all along propheſie
the quite contrary, addreſſes his opponent in theſe words
x The prophets, which have been before me, and before the
of old, propheſied both againſt many countries, and againſt gre
kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of peſtilence; the prophet
which propheſieth of peace, when the word of the prophet ſha
come to paſs, then ſhall the prophet be known, whether the Lor
hath truly ſent him: whereby he intimates, that, as we canno
account him to be a falſe prophet, who threatens an evil, whic
does not come to paſs, becauſe repentance may intervene, an
ſtop God's avenging hand; ſo we have no cauſe to believe him
who promiſes a bleſſing, to be a true prophet, until the bleſſin
confirms the truth of his prophecy; becauſe there is not the lik
reaſon for God's deferring his promiſes, as there is for not per
forming his threats. y If then the coming of the Meſſias wa
an event, in which, not the Jews only, but all the nations of th
world were to be bleſſed; to ſuppoſe, that he did not come a
the time appointed, is not only to reproach the prophets, wh
foretold his coming, but to impeach the veracity likewiſe of tha
divine Spirit, by which theſe holy men of old ſpake, as they
were directed.

The ſins of the Jews, no obſtruction. We grant indeed, that our iniquities do frequently with-hol
God's bleſſings from us, but, in relation to the bleſſing we ar
now conſidering, they could not have that effect, becauſe w
have the teſtimony of God himſelf, that, in this reſpect, h
would, upon no conſideration, z break his covenant, nor alte
the thing that had gone out of his lips: I have ſworn once b
m

* Jer. xxviii. 9. x Ibid. ver. 8, 9. y Kidder's Demonſtration, Part II
z Pſal. lxxxix. 31, &c.

Holineſs, ſays he, that I will not fail David, concerning the ing of the Meſſias of his lineage and deſcent; for ſo he goes his ſeed ſhall endure for ever, and his ſeat is like the ſun ore me; he ſhall ſtand faſt for evermore as the moon, and as faithful witneſs in heaven: what then can the ſins and tranſſions of the Jews be, that they ſhould vacate and defeat ſuch mn and expreſs prophecies? [a] That old idolatry, which was foundation of ſo much miſchief to them, they have, ever e their return from the Babyloniſh captivity, laid aſide: that tempt of the law, for which they were ſo frequently reproved their prophets, they have endeavoured to reform, and ating one melancholy conſideration) have no more iniquities number, nor more heinous in their nature to anſwer for, n other people; and yet they make their ſins their ſubterfuge n this occaſion, and in the language of the prophet, call mſelves [b] a people laden with iniquity, a ſeed of evil-doers, dren that are corrupters, that have forſaken the Lord, and voked the Holy One of Iſrael unto anger. But, allowing ir iniquities to be as great as they ſuppoſe them on this occa-, yet was not the Meſſias promiſed as a remedy for ſin? Is the declared purpoſe of his coming, [c] to make an end of ſins, to make a reconciliation for iniquity? [d] In that day there l be a fountain opened, ſays the prophet, to the houſe of vid, and to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, for ſin and for unnneſs: and if ſo, then are the ſins of the Jews ſo far from ng a reaſon for the deferring of his coming, that they are her an argument for the haſtening it; that ſuch as were in kneſs might ſee a marvellous light, and to them, who ſat in ſhadow of death, [h] the Sun of Righteouſneſs might ariſe h healing in his wings. Thus having ſhewn, that notwithding the Jewiſh pretences for delay, the time of the Meſſiah's ning is moſt certainly elapſed; we ſhall now endeavour to ve,

IV. THAT our bleſſed Saviour, in whom we truſt, is that y Meſſias, whom the ſcriptures characteriſe, and whom the ws, in their infidelity, vainly expect. And this we ſhall do, obſerving how all the predictions of the prophets, concern- the one, agree with the account, which the evangeliſts give of the other. Jeſus proved to be the Meſſias.

. THE prophecies require, that the Meſſias ſhould ariſe from nation of the Jews, from the tribe of Judah, from the fay of David; be born of a virgin, in the town of Bethlehem, have his conſtant reſidence at Nazareth of Galilee. To purpoſe, we read in the prophets, that [i] in the ſeed of raham, the great progenitor of the Jews, all the nations of earth ſhould be bleſſed; that [k] his brethren ſhould praiſe Judah, From the fulfilling of the prophecies.

Kidder's Demonſtration, Part III. b Iſa. i. 4. c Dan. ix. 24. d Zech. . 1. h Mal. iv. 2. i Gen. xxii. 18. k Ibid. xlix. 8, 10.

Judah, from whom Shiloh was to come, and his Father's children bow before him; that God would [l] raiſe unto David a righteous branch, and a king to execute judgment and juſtice in the earth; that [m] a virgin ſhould conceive, and bear a ſon, and ſhould call his name Immanuel; that [n] out of Bethlehem in the land of Judah, ſhould come a governor, who ſhould rule Iſrael, and that, [o] in the way of the ſea, beyond Jordan in Galilee of the nations, the people, that walked in darkneſs, ſhould ſee a great light, &c. And to the ſame purpoſe, we read in the evangeliſts, what the genealogy of our Lord and Saviour was; that by birth he was a Jew, * deſcended from the tribe of Judah, [p] of the houſe and lineage of David, [q] born of an immaculate virgin †, by a ſpecial providence, in the city of David which is called Bethlehem; but brought up, with his reputed father, in a place of Galilee, named Nazareth.

THE prophecies require, that this Meſſias ſhould not only be a prophet, to teach and inſtruct, but a great prince likewiſe conſtituted by God, to rule and govern his people; to deliver them from oppreſſion and ſlavery; to ſubdue their enemies, and reduce all nations, both Jew and Greek, under his dominion: but, notwithſtanding this, that he ſhould be a prince of a peculiar character, juſt and merciful in his adminiſtration, meek and gentle in his diſpoſition, mean and humble in his appearance, living a poor inglorious life, dying a cruel and ignominious death, and yet bearing all with invincible patience, and making his ſufferings ultimately redound to the ſalvation of mankind, by becoming an atonement and propitiation for ſin. To this purpoſe, we read in the Old Teſtament, that [r] God would raiſe up a prophet, like unto Moſes, and put his words in his mouth; and [s] anoint him to preach good tidings unto the meek, and to bind up the broken-hearted; that he would [t] ſet a king upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to eſtabliſh it, with judgment and with juſtice for ever; who ſhould [u] proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound; who, * girding his ſword upon his thigh, ſhould go out conquering and to conquer, until he made [x] the inhabitants of the wilderneſs kneel before him, and his enemies lick the duſt; until his dominion ſhould be extended from one ſea to another, and from the flood unto the world's end. For [y] from the riſing of the ſun, even to the going down of the ſame, his name ſhall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place, incenſe offered to his name, and a pure offering. But how powerful and victorious ſoever he might prove, yet ſtill he was to be the [z] Prince of Peace; [a] righteouſneſs was to be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulneſs the girdle of his reins;

l Jer. xxiii. 5. m Iſa. vii. 14. n Mic. v. 2. o Iſa. ix. 1, 2. * John vii. 41. 42.
p Luke ii. 4. q Matth. ii. 5, 6. Luke ii. 11. † Ibid. i. 34. r Deut. xviii. 15.
s Iſa. lxi. 1. t Ibid. ix. 7. u Ibid. lxi. 1. * Pſal. xlv. 3. x Ibid. lxxii. 9.
y Mal. i. 11. z Iſa. ix. 6. a Ibid. xi. 5.

[b] like a ſhepherd was he to feed his flock, and gather the
bs with his arms, and carry them in his boſom, and gently
d thoſe that were with young: for [c] behold, thy king cometh
o thee, he is juſt, and having ſalvation, lowly, and riding
n an aſs; [d] he hath no form or comelineſs, and when thou
t ſee him, there is no beauty that thou ſhouldeſt deſire him:
ſhall be deſpiſed and rejected of men, a man of ſorrows, and
uainted with grief; and the world, as it were, ſhall hide
ir faces from him; but all this while, [e] he ſhall not cry, nor
ſe his voice to be heard in the ſtreet; like a lamb, ſhall he be
ught to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her ſhearers is
nb, ſo he ſhall not open his mouth; and, though he be num-
ed with the tranſgreſſors, yet ſhall he make his ſoul an offer-
for ſin, juſtify many, and bear their iniquities, and make in-
ceſſion for the tranſgreſſors. To the ſame purpoſe, we read
the New Teſtament, that, as a prophet, he expounded and
lied the holy ſcriptures ſo, [f] that all, who heard him, were
niſhed at his underſtanding, and [g] wondered at the gracious
rds which proceeded out of his mouth: and that as a king,
e deſtroyed him, who had the power of death, that is the
il, and delivering them, who through fear of death, were all
ir life-time ſubject unto bondage. Therein we read of the
eading of the goſpel, and the large extent of his kingdom,
en [i] multitudes of believers, and [k] devout men of every nation
der heaven, leaving their ſuperſtition and idolatry, embraced
chriſtian faith; and there we read too of the poor figure and
earance he made in the world, who, [l] being in the form of
d, took upon him the form of a ſervant, and made himſelf of
reputation: we read of his quiet and peaceable diſpoſition, in
attempting any reſiſtance or revenge upon provocations of
greateſt injuries and affronts; of his exceeding meekneſs and
rity, in pitying all perſons in any want or diſtreſs, and even
vailing the vengeance he foreſaw impendent on his perſecu-
s; of his marvellous humility, in ſhunning and rejecting ho-
rs, and condeſcending to the meaneſt offices and employments;
his unparalleled patience, in ſubmitting to what the will
d providence of God laid upon him, poverty and diſgrace,
ter pains and anguiſhes, both of body and mind, and the moſt
rrid and moſt opprobrious death, chearfully and contentedly,
thout the leaſt murmur or regret: and in ſhort, there we
d of our Saviour's dying, not for his own offences, but for
rs; that, from the foundation of the world, his death was
lained to be a propitiation for the ſins of mankind, his blood
forth [m] to be a ſacrifice of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour unto God;
i that, [n] if the blood of bulls and of goats ſanctified to the
purifying

[b] Iſa. xl. 11. [c] Zech. ix. 9. [d] Iſa. liii. 2. [e] Iſa. xlii. 2. [f] Luke ii. 47.
[g] Ibid. iv. 22. [h] Heb. ii. 14, 15. [i] Acts v. 14. [k] Ibid. ii. 5. [l] Phil. ii. 6, 7.
[m] Eph. v. 2. [n] Heb. ix. 13, 14.

purifying of the flesh, how much more should the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?

ONCE more, the prophecies are very exact in foretelling every little circumstance, relating to the Messiah's death and exaltation; and the evangelists, as they go along, have observed, how each of these very strangely concurred, and were accomplished in our Saviour's crucifixion, and other subsequent events. [o] That he who was born, should die, hath nothing of wonder in it; but that he should [p] die on the cross, who, by the laws of the country, had he been guilty, must have been stoned; that he, who had so many enemies, should yet be [q] betrayed by one of his disciples; that he, who had the bag, and, one would think, not that temptation to corruption, should betray him [r] for so vile a price as thirty pieces of silver; that this price of blood should be employed in a work of mercy, to [s] buy a field to bury strangers in; that he should die [t] among thieves and malefactors, who spent his time in doing good; and the multitude, which were wont to pity dying criminals, should [u] deride him in his greatest miseries; that he should * drink vinegar on the cross, instead of a narcotic potion, as the custom was; and the soldiers, after they [x] had parted his garments, should cast lots for his coat; that they should not [y] break his bones, as the manner was among them, but only [z] pierce his side with a spear; that he, who was crucified, should be interred, contrary to the practice of the Romans, who did not bury those, who died upon the cross, and [a] persons, of the highest rank and character should agree in the honourable interment of one, who died so ignominious a death; that upon this interment, he should not, as other mortals do, [b] taste of corruption; but, after a [c] short stay in the grave, rise again, and, in a proper time, [d] ascend into the highest heavens, leading captivity captive, and become himself [e] the author of eternal salvation: in a word, that the same person should suffer and die, and yet reign and prosper; suffer like a vile malefactor, and yet reign like a triumphant conqueror; these are things so strange and so surprising, so much beyond what any history besides affords us, that, if we believe but the matter of fact, which we have all the reason in the world to believe, we cannot but find abundant reason, to adore the wisdom and goodness of God, who has so fully accomplished in our Jesus, what was so punctually foretold of the Messias many ages before.

So far then as the word of prophecy is a light to direct us unto Christ, we have all the predictions of the Old Testament relating

o Kidder's Demonstration. p Psal. xxii. 16. John xix. 25. q Psal. xli. 9. Matth. xxvi. 47. r Zech. xi. 12. Matth. xxvi. 15. s Zech. xi. 13. Matth. xxvii. 7. t Mark xv. 27. u Ps. xxii. 7, 8. Matth. xxvii. 39, 43. * Psa. lxix. 21. John xix. 29, 30. x Psal. xxii. 18. John xix. 23, 24. y Exodus xii. 46. John xix. 33. z Zech. xii. 10. John xix. 34. a Isa. liii. 9. John xix. 38, 39. b Psalm xvi. 10. Mat. xxviii. 6. c Hos. vi. 2. Mat. xii. 40 d Psa. lviii. 18. Acts i. 9, 10. e Heb. v. 9.

relating to his birth and life, his death and resurrection, meeting together, as rays in a centre, and pointing at our Jesus, as that great and eminent person, ordained by God to come into the world, and promised as a mighty blessing to his people.

An objection.

"BUT though these prophecies remit you to Christ, may the "Jews reply, yet may you not be mistaken in their interpretation, and apply that to him, which is properly meant of another? [f] A kingdom of this world, and not of this world, "contempt and adoration, poverty and majesty, persecution and "peace, sufferings and triumphs, a cross and a throne, the scandalous death of a private man, and the everlasting dominion "of an universal monarch; these are things so inconsistent, so "impossible to meet in the same subject, that there is great presumption to believe you are not a little mistaken in the application of those predictions which are produced to countenance your pretended Saviour's humiliation, and to apologize "for his being put to an ignominious death; whereas the whole "tenor of the prophecies, undoubtedly applicable to him, represent him as a great and successful conqueror." This is the substance, I think, of what the Jews have to object against the gospel-account of our Saviour's life and transactions, and the different stages of abasement and exaltation, through which he passed: and to give it a plain and proper solution, we shall,

1. ASSIGN some reasons why many of the prophecies, those relating to the Messias in particular, should be obscure, and liable to misconstructions: and then,

2. MAKE it appear, that, notwithstanding this obscurity, the christian interpretation of Old Testament prophecies, concerning the Messias, is undoubtedly true.

Answered, by shewing why prophecies are obscure.

1. NOW it cannot but be obvious to every common reader, that, of all the parts of scripture, the prophetic books abound most with figurative schemes of speech, which naturally produce difficulty in the sense, and are not, without great application, and some previous knowledge, rightly to be understood. [g] There are so many bold metaphors, and hyperbolical expressions, so many allegories and parables; such an air of rapture, such flame and fire throughout; so many allusions to particular places, and things, and customs, of which, these books themselves do give but dark intimations; so frequent changes of persons spoken of; and so many, so sudden, and, to readers less observant, seemingly abrupt transitions from one subject to another, that it is not at all to be wondered at, if the interpreters of scripture have fallen into a greater variety of opinions concerning this part of it, than any other. Figures indeed in some places are so obvious, that one cannot adhere to the literal sense, without manifestly departing from the mind of the author: but in others, it may be questioned, whether the literal or figurative signification

[f] Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures. [g] Stanhope, ibid.

ought to be preferred, where both are true, both rational, and both agreeable to the principles of ſound faith. In ſimilitudes and parables, every circumſtance is ſometimes ſignificant, and to be taken notice of, in the explanation of the whole; and ſometimes the greater part of them ſerve chiefly for elegance and ornament, and the main drift and ſubſtance of the whole is only to be attended to; but in tranſitions the prophet is ſtill more uncertain; ſometimes [h] he is ſpeaking of events near at hand, when, all on a ſudden, a ſtrong impulſe of the holy Spirit carries him up on high to others, far more diſtant and noble; and afterwards, without any warning to the reader, he is brought back, and ſet down at the nearer and meaner event, which, by ſome analogy or other, gave occaſion for the mention of the more remote and ſublime. He ſpeaks ſometimes in his own, ſometimes in God's, ſometimes in the church's name, mentions the perſon he ſpeaks of, ſometimes under his proper character, ſometimes under [i] the name and character of another, who bears ſome reſemblance to him; and many times puts whole countries, and kingdoms, and ſocieties of men, not for the places and perſons only, whoſe names they bear, but for others, in after-ages, that come up to a ſimilitude in the ſame ſins and circumſtances.

Thoſe concerning the Meſſias more eſpecially. From the greatneſs of the ſubject.

UPON theſe and ſeveral other accounts, it cannot well be imagined but that prophecies in general muſt be obſcure; but then there are other conſiderations, ariſing from the nature of the ſubject itſelf, which bring the predictions concerning the Meſſias under a neceſſity of being more involved in a great variety of figures and daring flights than any other predictions whatever. This the Jews themſelves make no difficulty to allow; and ſome of their [k] greateſt doctors have laid it down for a rule in interpreting the prophets, [l] that they are not literally to be underſtood, by reaſon of thoſe metaphorical expreſſions; and therefore we need leſs wonder that we meet with ſuch figures and lofty images, where the benefits ſpoken of are of ſo ſpiritual and ſo exalted a nature as to make the pomp of expreſſion the effect of neceſſity, which would in other caſes paſs for choſen and artificial. Our Saviour, for inſtance, is repreſented in ſcripture, 1. As a [m] prophet far above the reſt, both for the perfection and ſucceſs of his doctrine, and the ſtupendous teſtimony given of it by his miracles; 2. As a [n] prieſt, not like thoſe of the Aaronical ſucceſſion, who made atonement for the people by offering other creatures daily; but one of another order, poſſeſſed of an everlaſting prieſthood, and expiating the ſins

h Vid. Iſa. vii. 10. to 18. i Ibid. xliii. 44, 49. Jer. xxx 9. Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. Hoſ. iii. 5. Mal. iv. 5. k Maim. More Nevoch. p. 2. c. 30. Menas Ben Iſrael, Qu. in Gen. xxx. l This appears to be their method of interpreting ſeveral paſſages of the Old Teſtament, acknowledged by themſelves to belong to the Meſſias, ſuch as the 72d Pſalm; the 11th, 35th, 68th and 66th of Iſaiah; the 5th of Micah; the two laſt chapters of Zechariah, and ſundry others. Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels, Vol. III. m Deut. xviii. 15, &c. Iſa. ii. 3. Mich. iv. 2. n Pſal. cx. 4.

ns of the world by the sacrifice of himself; and, 3. As a [o] king eaceful and glorious, vested in a kingdom different from all thers, in that it is spiritual and eternal, a dominion over the ouls, as well as the bodies and fortunes of his subjects, and a overnment, of whose stability and increase there should be no nd. Now, in these several capacities, every thing was exraordinary; all so noble as to require the most towering flights ven of inspired eloquence to describe them worthily; and ome so remote from sense and common appearances, that there vas a necessity of borrowed resemblances, to give us any idea f them at all. The prophets in this case, I say, were obliged o take in sensible images to make themselves understood, and o form their discourses of spiritual and invisible blessings upon uch temporal advantages, as the people they were sent to vere best acquainted and most delighted with. And as the oftiness, so

2. THE seeming difference of the figures wherein the pro- The different figures in expressing it. hets represent the person of the Messias, according to the dierent characters he sustained, is a great addition to the obscuity of their writings. Thus, when at some times they call him a worm and no man, the scorn of men, and the out-cast of he people; one [q] that was despised and rejected, smitten and fflicted, and [r] cut off from the land of the living; and at other imes, [s] fairer than the children of men, and [t] sitting at the ight hand of God, the God [u] whose throne is for ever and ever, and the Lord * whose name alone is excellent in all the world, [x] who laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of his hands: when they give such distant and almost contradictory characters of one and the same person, and both in different respects belonging to him, at one and the same time too; these seeming incongruities may well be allowed to create some confusion in men, who are not careful to distinguish and apply, and compare the circumstances of the Messias, and the prophecies foretelling him, justly together; whereas to consider him, both in his divine and human nature, sometimes in his state of abasement, and sometimes in his state of exaltation, according as the prophecy points, clears up this obscurity at once.

3. ANOTHER cause of the obscurity of those prophecies, The different offices he sustains. which particularly concern the Messias, may be ascribed to those different offices under which he is there represented, and the promiscuous mention of his first and second coming, which some are not careful enough to distinguish. The Jews in this respect are very unhappy; for, being prepossessed with a notion of Christ's temporal grandeur, and finding so many pompous descriptions of the glory and triumphs of his kingdom, they cannot

o Psal. lxxii. lxxix. Isa. ix. 6, 7. xi. xl. xlix. Hos. iii. Jer. xxx. Ezek. xxxiv. 24. and Zech. ix, &c. p Psal. xxii. 6. q Isa. liii. 3. r Dan. ix. 26. s Psal. xlv. 2. t Ibid. cx. 1. u Ibid. xlv. 6. * Ibid. viii. 1. x Ibid. cii. 25.

not reliſh any part of his humiliation; and therefore, whatever they meet with in ſcripture that has an aſpect this way, they immediately apply to ſome other perſon, and ſo make one part of the prophecy incompatible with the other. Now, to remedy this abuſe, it may not be improper to remind them that the Meſſias, as we ſaid, is to be conſidered in the capacity of a prophet, and prieſt, as well as a king; and that though the predictions relating to his royal authority be enlarged upon more copiouſly, as being the nobleſt part of his character, than either of the other; yet are they all equally eſſential to the ſcheme of man's redemption, though not capable of being equally exerciſed, at one and the ſame time, by one and the ſame perſon.

THE prophet's buſineſs was to teach the people: and [y] ſince this great prophet's deſign was to raiſe mens affections and deſires, by the cleareſt revelation of happineſs in a future inviſible ſtate; to ſupport them under afflictions and perſecutions, and to juſtify the providence of God in the ſufferings of good men, for whom he hath an ineſtimable recompence in reſerve: it was no more than requiſite that ſuch a preacher's example ſhould bear teſtimony to his doctrine. In like manner the prieſt's buſineſs chiefly conſiſted in making interceſſion for the people by the atonement of bloody ſacrifices; and therefore he who was to ſanctify the people by the ſacrifice of his own blood muſt of neceſſity die: but now the ſolemn adminiſtration of his kingly office could not be entered upon until the two former were diſcharged, becauſe in the predictions of the Meſſias, his promotion to a kingdom is expreſsly mentioned as the reward of his fidelity and ſufferings; [z] becauſe my righteous ſervant, ſays God, did bear the iniquities of many, and poured out his ſoul unto death, I therefore will divide him a portion with the great, and he ſhall divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong. Since then, according to the nature and order of things, Chriſt was to ſuffer before he could reign; to anſwer his prophetic character, in his teaching and practice, and his ſacerdotal, in his death and interceſſion, before he could be admitted to his regal, which he then only aſſumed, when after his reſurrection he aſcended up on high, and was ſeated at God's right hand; it muſt needs be a deception in the Jews to have their attention ſo ſet upon the Meſſiah's regal character, as almoſt wholly to overlook the prieſtly and prophetical; and whoever is under the influence of ſuch a deception, is but in a bad diſpoſition to interpret ſcripture. And from theſe conſiderations we proceed,

The chriſtian interpretation of prophecies vindicated.

2. To juſtify our own interpretation, and to make it appear, that notwithſtanding the obſcurity of the prophecies concerning the Meſſias, we Chriſtians are let into the knowledge of expounding and applying them right. That our bleſſed Saviour was a prophet ſent from God, is evident not only from the many

y Stanhope's Sermon's at Boyle's Lectures. z Iſa. liii. 11, 12.

miraculous works which he did, but from the confeſſion is greateſt enemies. For though they differed in their ments as to what prophet it was that he perſonated, ſome ing him [a] to be one of the old prophets riſen from the ; others that he was the new prophet Elias; and others the Baptiſt reſtored to life again; yet all agreed that he a prophet, [b] mighty in word and deed; and for this reaſon chief prieſts feared to lay hands on him, [c] becauſe the mul- le took him to be a prophet. Nay, they not only took him e a prophet, but to be that great and eminent prophet whom es [d] had foretold; and therefore, upon his raiſing the wi- 's ſon at Naim, [e] they glorified God, ſaying, that a great phet is riſen up among us; as upon another miraculous oc- n, they declared openly, [f] this is of a truth the prophet ſhould come into the world.

Now one part of this great prophet's office was, to explain ſenſe of the Jewiſh ſcriptures, and to remove the obſcurity was to remain on many prophecies until his coming. In the Jews were ſo generally perſuaded, that in every diffi- y they could not explain, it was an uſual thing for them to [h] Elias will come and reveal all things; to the ſame pur- e as the woman of Samaria anſwered our Saviour, [i] I know Meſſias cometh, and when he is come he will teach as all gs. Now, if our Saviour himſelf was a prophet, it was oſſible for him to have been miſtaken in the interpretation of prophecy; becauſe he interpreted by the very ſame ſpirit erewith the prophets wrote; and if he communicated the e ſpirit to his apoſtles (as the day of Pentecoſt made it ma- ſt he did) then muſt their judgment too, whenever it paſſed n any text, be deciſive, even though it ſhould differ from ſenſe of the Jewiſh doctors. But when it is more than bable that their interpretation agreed with the ſenſe of theſe viſh doctors (ſince to put a falſe or controverted ſenſe on dictions confeſſedly belonging to the Meſſias, had been both old and fruitleſs attempt) this is ſtill a farther confirmation their truth and integrity in applying the text, in the Old ſtament, literally fulfilled in Jeſus, to the proof of his being true Meſſias.

IT is well obſerved by a great man of our own, [k] that the viſh traditions, contrary to the law of God, have done leſs t to religion than the loſs of ſome Jewiſh traditions, or rules interpreting ſcripture which had been received among the ient Hebrew [l] Rabbins, but rejected by the later Jewiſh ſters, who, to get quit of all the difficulties that do ſurround them,

Luke ix. 19. b Ibid. xxiv. 19. c Matth. xiv. 5. d Deut. xviii. 5. uke vii. 16. f John vi. 14. g Biſhop Chandler's Defence of Chriſtianity. . All obſcurities ſhall be removed under the Meſſias, whoſe fore runner contemporary Elias was expected to be. i John iv. 25. k Dr Jackſon. . II. Sect. 2. c. 9. l Thus as to the prophecy of Zechariah, where the king

is

them, have deviſed the expedient of two Chriſts, one the of Joſeph, and the other the ſon of David; the former to ſu and die; the latter to conquer and reign: a bold unheard fiction which their anceſtors were ſtrangers to, and what word of God knows nothing of. It repreſents indeed one the ſame perſon, under very oppoſite circumſtances, a man ſorrow and of joy, oppreſſed and exalted, deſpiſed and ador ſuffering and triumphing, hanging upon a croſs and ſeated up a throne; but this it does under different views, and accord to the different characters he ſuſtained. He was a prophet teach us the will of God; and he was a prieſt to make ato ment for us; but theſe offices he could not execute with trouble and affliction, without ſuffering and dying, which came into the world to finiſh firſt, before he took poſſeſſion his kingdom. His ſufferings were accompliſhed here on ear but his triumphs did not begin until he was aſcended into h ven; nor ſhall the full glories of his kingdom be revealed diſplayed until, with ten thouſand of his mighty angels, he ſh return from thence to judge the world in righteouſneſs, [m] to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey his goſpel.

HAVING thus vindicated the chriſtian interpretation of anti prophecies, which point out the time and place of the Meſſia birth, his perſonal qualities, manner of life, and circumſtan of death, all accompliſhed in our bleſſed Saviour; we come to another characteriſtic of him, and that is,

Chriſt proved to be the Meſſias from his miracles.

2. THE great and miraculous works which he was to The Jews indeed of late are fallen into a notion, [n] that mira are not neceſſary to prove a divine miſſion, and that the Meſ when he comes, is to do no other wonders [o] than to fight Lo

is repreſented riding on an aſs, it is twice explained of the Meſſias in the mud; as to that of Daniel, where the prince is to be cut off in ſo many we this ſaying is ſtill extant in the Talmud, as the tradition of former time Daniel is delivered to us the end of the Meſſias, *i. e.* the term wherei ought to come, as Jarchi explains it: and (to name no more) as to the fa 53d chapter of Iſaiah, their Targum is expreſs that it relates to the Me and not only ſo, but their doctors with one mouth aſſert (as they receive by tradition from their anceſtors) that the Meſſias muſt be underſtood by G ſervant, that ſhall proſper and be exalted. Biſhop Chandler's Defenc Chriſtianity. If then there be any miſinterpretation of the prophecies, it i we, but the modern Jews that are guilty of it, who, to maintain their gr againſt chriſtians, have departed from the expoſitions of their forefathers, in contradiction to Philo and Joſephus, as well as other authors, have perve both chronology and hiſtory, placing the paſſion of our Saviour ſixty years before the true account of it, although we have the teſtimony of Ta that he ſuffered under Pontius Pilate. Jenkins's Reaſonableneſs. m 2 T i. 8. n The learned Jew who diſputed with Limborch, anno 1687, cont that the prophets foretold neither time nor place of the nativity of the Me and ſays that miracles were of no uſe to prove his miſſion, but only to g the Jews together from all parts of the world, and to conquer the na Leſlie's ſhort Method with the Jews. o Mahomet made the like excuſe his not working of miracles. He ſaid that Moſes, Solomon and Jeſus,

's battles, and conquer all before him: but a ſmall reflec- will convince us, that in the days of our Saviour, their fore- rs were of a contrary opinion. When [p] John the Baptiſt heard of the works which Chriſt did, he ſent two of his bles with this meſſage to him, Art thou he that ſhould come, the Meſſias) or look we for another? To whom our Sa- r returned this anſwer; Go, and ſhew John again theſe gs which ye do hear and ſee; the blind receive their ſight, the lame walk, and the lepers are cleanſed, and the deaf , and the dead are raiſed up. The anſwer is in a great ſure taken from the prophet [q] Iſaiah, deſcribing the great rations of the Meſſias; and, by remitting the Baptiſt to them, Saviour has both proved the truth of his own miſſion, and neceſſity of miracles in any other who pretends to the au- ity of a prophet ſent from God. The demand therefore h the Jews made (had it proceeded from a good intent) neither impertinent nor unreaſonable; [r] Maſter, we would a ſign from thee; what ſign therefore doſt thou do, that we ſee and believe thee? And the reply which our Saviour es ſeems to allow of the juſtneſs of it; [s] If I witneſs of my- my witneſs is not true, *i. e.* not credible; [t] if I do not the ks of my father (*i. e.* works only imputable to God's ex- rdinary power) believe me not; but [u] if I do the works a- g you which no man elſe has done; if I cure all diſeaſes a touch, and * with the finger of God caſt out devils, no t the kingdom of God is come upon you.

His miracles not diabolical.

low many in number, how great in power, how beneficial heir effects the miracles were which our Saviour wrought, had occaſion to conſider [x] elſewhere; and ſhall only now rve from what principle they did proceed: and this the er, becauſe there have not been wanting thoſe, who have the hardneſs to aſcribe our Lord's miracles [y] to magical en- ntment, and to compare them with ſuch as falſe prophets and ards, and the vileſt impoſtors have been ſaid to do in all . Whether it be conſiſtent with the wiſdom and goodneſs God to ſuffer men under the influence of evil ſpirits to do miracles in confirmation of a real impoſture, [z] is an argu- t wherein the learned are divided, and what we ſhall not purſue

to ſhew God's righteouſneſs, wiſdom, and clemency, to which miracles e neceſſary to gain belief; but that he was ſent to ſhew God's fortitude, to h no miracles were neceſſary, but to enforce it with the ſword, which ied its own conviction. Leſlie, ibid. p Matth. xi. 4, 5. q Iſa. xxxv. 5, 6. hn vi. 30. s Ibid. v. 31. t Ibid. x. 37. u Ibid xv. 24. * Luke xi. 20. e Vol. I. p. 55. y Vid. Juſt. in Mart. Dial. cum Tryph. Celſus, as he is ed by Origen, accounts for our Saviour's miracles by pretending that he t into Egypt, and there learnt the art of doing wonderful works; and ſe- l of the Talmudic writers affirm that he was well verſed in magic; while rs aſcribe all his wonderful works to the art he had in pronouncing the e Jehovah, which he learnt in the temple, having, as they ſay, once ſecretly eyed himſelf into the ſanctuary for that purpoſe. Chandler on Miracles. d. Chandler, ibid. and Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacræ.

purſue at preſent. We will allow it for once, that in ſo
caſes God may permit this to be, in order to exerciſe our fa
[a] and to prove us whether we will adhere to the truth wh
he hath already, by mighty ſigns and tokens, eſtabliſhed am
us: but that this may be done in all caſes, without any me
to diſtinguiſh falſe from true miracles, this is a thing impoſſib
[b] There are ſome things ſo great, that it is not reaſonable to c
ceive that any created powers can do them, or that, if t
could, God would permit them to have ſucceſs; ſuch is
making a great and general alteration in the courſe of natu
ſome things ſo good and beneficial to mankind, that wicked
infernal agents will not, even though they were able, perfo
them; ſuch are the ejection of devils, or the diſcovery of m
truths: ſome things of ſuch a nature that theſe malicious ſpir
which are under the reſtraint and controul of their judge, d
not do them for fear of meeting ſevere chaſtiſement for th
preſumption; ſuch may be the ſpecial names of God, or op
ſing directly his extraordinary meſſengers: and laſtly, there
ſome things ſo peculiarly appropriated to God, that no oth
being otherwiſe than as it is acted by his divine power, and i
mediately dependent on it, can in the leaſt intermeddle wit
ſuch are the knowledge of future contingents, the diſcernm
of our ſecret thoughts and intentions, and the reſtitution of m
from a ſtate of death; for I am he, and there is none beſi
me, ſaith the Lord; [d] I ſhew the things to come; [e] I ſea
the heart, and try the reins; [f] I kill, and I make alive.

THERE being ſo many caſes then wherein either the will
power of diabolical agents muſt fail, their compaſs of worki
miracles cannot be ſo large as ſome may imagine; but even
it were more extended than it is, upon the ſuppoſition that
believe a righteous providence, we can hardly imagine that
will ſuffer them to uſurp ſuch a tyranny over the minds of m
as to make thoſe things paſs with the ſober and inquiſitive pa
of the world for divine miracles, which were only counterfe
and impoſtors: [g] if the providence of God, I ſay, be concern
in the diſcovery of Satan's deſigns, there muſt be ſome means
this diſcovery; and that means can be ſuppoſed to be no oth
than ſome rational and ſatisfactory evidence, whereby we m
know when ſtrange and miraculous things are done by Satan
deceive men, and when, by the power of God, to confirm a divi
teſtimony.

Rules for diſtinguiſhing between true and falſe miracles.

THE rules then that are generally laid down in order
diſtinguiſh true miracles from falſe, and to ſatisfy ourſelves wh
ther they are done by God and good ſpirits, or by evil ang

a Deut. xiii. 1. b Barrow's works, Vol. III. c Jer. v. 22. xxxiii. 25. d
xli. 23. e Jer. xvii. 10. f Deut. xxxii. 39. g Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacræ.

oppoſition to him, [h] are ſuch as either reſpect, 1. The works emſelves, and their manner of being done; or, 2. The perns themſelves, and the ends for which they are done.

1. IN relation to the works themſelves, it is required that ey be [i] poſſible, ſince no power whatever can effect that which ſtrictly impoſſible; that they be [k] probable, ſince the divine ower will hardly concern itſelf in what ſavours of fable and omance; that they be [l] not below the majeſty of God, as he the great ruler and governor of the world; nor inconſiſtent ith his character, as he is a good and gracious Being. It is rther required, that they be done openly, in the eye of the orld, and before many competent witneſſes; that they be one readily, ſo that no previous forms or ceremonies may make hem look like magic, or incantation; that they be done upon ll important occaſions, to ſhew the permanency of the divine ower; and that the power be communicated to others, and renain in the hands of their ſucceſſors, ſtill producing the ſame reat effects.

2. IN relation to the perſons, pretending to a divine miſſion nd authority, it is neceſſary that they be in the perfect exerciſe f their reaſon and ſenſes: that they be conſtant and uniform in he meſſage they deliver; men that fear God, and have a good eport for their unblameable converſation; and that the doctrine hey endeavour to eſtabliſh by their miracles, be conſiſtent with he principles of true reaſon and natural religion; conſiſtent with ight notions and worſhip of God; conſiſtent with the former evelations he has made of his will; of a fit tendency to deſtroy he devil's power in the world, to recover men from their ignorance, to reform them from their vices, to lead them into the ractice of virtue and true godlineſs, by proper motives and rguments; and in ſhort, to advance the general welfare of ocieties, as well as every man's particular happineſs in this life, nd preparation for a better. And now to apply theſe marks nd characters to the miracles which our Saviour and his poſtles wrought.

1. WE may allow indeed, that what they did tranſcended the natural ſkill of any angel to effect; but it will not therefore follow, that they were any ways impoſſible, ſince they were not

Theſe rules applied to Chriſt.

h Vid. Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacræ, and Chandler on Miracles. i This deſtroys the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, the ſtanding miracle of the Roman church, but no great proof of its infallibility. k This deſtroys the credit of the few miracles pretended to be wrought by Mahomet, viz. his ſplitting of the moon, and his wonderful journey to heaven, &c. l This ſhews the folly of thoſe related by Philoſtratus, in his life of Apollonius Tyaneus: for can any thing be more trifling than the miraculous dance of the ſtools and tables, and cups and diſhes, and placing themſelves in order for his entertainment among the Indians? Any thing more ſilly than his pretending to underſtand the language of birds, or the queſtions he puts to Achilles's ghoſt; as whether Polyxena was ſlain at his tomb, and whether Helen was carried to Troy or no? Wonderful queſtions indeed to be aſked by ſo brave a philoſopher, whom the enemies of chriſtianity ſet up in competition with Jeſus! Stillingfleet's Sermons.

above the power of the first cause and supreme Being. [m] The same God who formed the eye could restore the blind his sight; he, who wrought the whole frame of our bodies, could as easily cure the maimed, and heal the diseased; and he, who causes the rain to descend, and to water the earth, that it may produce the various kinds of herbs and fruits, and minister bread to the eater, and seed to the sower, could not be at a loss to change water into wine, or to multiply the loaves and fishes, for the relief of a fainting, hungry multitude.

THAT wicked and malicious spirits should, for a long continuance of time, do innumerable acts of beneficence, kindness and charity to mankind, is a thing incredible, and quite repugnant to their known character; but that God should have compassion on his creatures, and exercise his tender mercies over the work of his hands; that he should raise the dead, and create bread for the hungry, and limbs for the maimed, are works both of power and mercy; and therefore intirely agreeable to his wisdom and goodness, since they naturally tended both to beget reverence in the minds of men towards his messenger, and to reconcile them to the belief and obedience of his heavenly will.

IT is natural to imagine that false prophets and impostors should creep into corners and obscure places, when they are called upon to give testimony of their mission, and in the few things they do, should endeavour to gratify the curiosity, and raise the admiration of their deluded followers. But so far was our Lord from seeming to have any desire of privacy, that he chose the most public places to perform his wonders in; [n] cleansing the leper in the view of the multitude; [o] healing the centurion's servant before many witnesses; [p] raising the ruler's daughter before the company that was to attend her funeral; [q] feeding four thousand men at one time, beside women and children: and at another, [r] entertaining no less than five thousand at his table. So far was he from contenting himself with a few miraculous actions, that almost every day and hour produced some fresh instance of his power and goodness; insomuch, that if all he did were recorded, the world itself (says the [s] apostle, but with something of hyperbole) would not contain the books which should be written: and so far from affecting any pomp or ceremony to delude or captivate the multitude, that he did all with a word's speaking. [t] Peace, be still, quelled the raging of the winds and waves; [u] Young man, arise, revived the widow's son; * Be it to thee, as thou desirest, cured the Canaanitish woman's daughter, possessed with a devil; [x] Ephatha, be opened, gave the deaf man hearing; [y] Be thou cleansed, healed

m Chandler on Miracles. n Matth. viii. 1, &c. o Ibid. p Matth. ix. 18. q Ibid. xv. 36, 37. r Mark vi. 34, &c. s John xxi. 25. t Mark iv. 39. u Luke vii. 14. * Matth. xv. 28. x Mark vii. 34, 35. y Luke v. 13.

aled the leper; and [z] Lazarus, come forth, raiſed him from e grave, who had been dead four days.

THESE miracles, ſo great in their nature, and ſo remarkable their manner, had our Saviour performed in his own perſon ly, he had given a demonſtration of his divine miſſion, and at the works which he did, were according to the power and ill of God; but when, even in the time of his miniſtration, e imparted to his diſciples the ſame power of caſting out devils, nd healing all manner of ſickneſs, and all manner of diſeaſes nong the people; when he promiſed, and made it good to em, that they ſhould do greater works than he had done, becauſe, by the power of their preaching and miracles, as a ther expreſſes it, the eyes of blind ſouls ſhould be opened, and e ears of them that were deaf to goodneſs, hearken to the recepts and promiſes of the goſpel; when he continued this ower to their ſucceſſors, [b] till chriſtianity was ſo fully eſtabliſh-d as to need no farther proof for its confimation, till it had vercome the power and policy of the world, and converted an nnumerable company of ſouls to the true worſhip and ſervice f God: when our Saviour did this, I ſay, both in his own per-on, and in the perſons of thoſe that ſucceeded him, what ſhall ve think? Did not he act by a power moſt evidently ſuperior to hat of the devil, when diſpoſſeſſing evil ſpirits, and forcing them o [c] confeſs, to [d] intreat, to [e] obey, to [f] expreſs an awe and read of him; when detecting and [g] defeating the treachery and orceries of Simon, by one apoſtle, and ſtriking Elymas with lindneſs, by another? Did not he and they act by a power ppoſite to devils, when rooting out their idolatry and ſuperſti-ion, [h] putting the heathen oracles to ſilence, diſcountenancing ll manner of wickedneſs, declaring that light and darkneſs may s well have fellowſhip, [i] as Chriſt and Belial? [k] Are theſe the words of one that hath a devil? Is he not declared to be mani-feſted, for this very purpoſe, [l] that he might deſtroy the works of the devil? Have we not ſhewn his miracles to be ſo many works of mercy and goodneſs? And [m] can a devil open the eyes of the blind? Is it in the power, is it in the inclination of the common enemy of mankind to do things ſo aſtoniſhingly great, ſo excellently good as thoſe which this man has done? Either therefore make the tree good, and his fruit good, or elſe make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by his fruit.

2. IN

z John xi. 43, 44. a Orig. cont. Celſ. L. II. b This power of working miracles in the chriſtian church, in greater or leſſer degrees, was continued many years; for Origen [contra Celſum] ſpeaking of the Spirit of God, tells us *eti ichnae hagiou pneumatos*, &c. that ſome footſteps of this holy Spirit remain, even to this day, among chriſtians, who caſt out devils, and perform many cures, and foreſaw ſome future events, according to the will of Chriſt.
c Luke iv. 34, 35. d Ibid. viii. 28, 31. e Matth. viii. 29, 32. f Ibid. viii. 34. g Acts viii. 13. h Euſeb. prep. Evang. L. V. i 1 Cor. x. 21. 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. k John x. 21. l 1 John iii. 8. m John. x. 21.

The character of Christ and his apostles

2. In trying the miracles of Christ, whether they were done by the interposition of a divine or diabolical power, we must examine into his character, and that of his apostles. [n] That they were in full possession of their reason and senses, the nature of their doctrines, the excellency of their precepts, their speeches, their apologies, in a word, their whole conduct is an abundant proof: that they were good and holy men appears from every part of their history; from their reproving vice in others, and carefully avoiding it themselves; their recommending the fear of God, and the love of justice and charity, of sobriety and temperance in their discourses; and their [o] proposing themselves for an example to others, which, in modesty, they could not have done, had they not been conscious of their own integrity, and able [p] to approve themselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned. Whatever opposition or difficulties they met with, they still continued firm to the principles of their great Master, and consistent with each other. Their arguments, their defences, their exhortations, their principles of action, their motives to virtue, the rewards and punishments they set before men, their behaviour to their enemies, and, in a word, their intire conduct was always, and every where the same. They none of them set up for themselves, nor divided into parties, nor wrought counter-miracles in opposition to one another, but had all the same end in view, and every where pursued it by the same means.

And of the christian religion.

[q] Such was the real character of the persons employed to propagate the religion of Jesus Christ: a religion that was worthy to be published by the Son of God, and confirmed by signs, and wonders, and miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost. For the great design of this religion is to establish the belief of a God, and his providence, and a future state of rewards and punishments; to teach men the nature of God, and that, as he is a Spirit, he is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth; to instruct them in their duty towards one another, and to oblige them, by the strongest motives, to observe and practise whatsoever things are true, and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report, and virtuous, and praise-worthy; and to persuade them to mortify every inordinate affection, and to attain to those excellent dispositions of mind which will make them resemble God, and become most useful in life, and best prepared for future happiness; in a word, to establish the practice of these two great duties, the love of God, and the love of our neighbour, upon these two excellent principles of faith in God, as a rewarder of those that seek him; and faith in Jesus Christ,

n Chandler on Miracles. o 1 Cor. iv. 16. p 2 Cor. vi. 4, 6. q Chandler, ibid.

riſt, as the Saviour and judge of men. And if this be the
or of the chriſtian religion, there is little reaſon to ſuppoſe
t the devil ſhould have any hand in effecting thoſe wonders
ich gave credit to the firſt appearance, and ſtrength, and ſuc-
s to the propagation of ſuch doctrines as were calculated on
rpoſe to deſtroy his dominion in the world, and upon its ruins,
erect the kingdom of God and his Chriſt.

THE ſum of the whole matter is this—If the goſpel-account Chriſt be true, then his intire character will appear con-
ent, and of a piece; but if he was a cheat and impoſtor, and holden to the aſſiſtance of evil ſpirits in what he did, it will a bundle of the greateſt contradictions in nature. That a
hteous and good man ſhould be ſent from God to reform the
rld; that he ſhould do many wonderful works of goodneſs to
nfirm his divine authority and miſſion; that he ſhould lead a
er, righteous, and godly life, and by his own example and
ecepts, teach others the practice of virtue, upon the principles
rewards and puniſhments in another life; that he ſhould be
proached and perſecuted by bad men, and die in confirmation
his character and doctrines, with great truſt and confidence in
od; and that a great deal of good ſhould, by a wiſe and gra-
us providence, be brought out of this inſtance of wickedneſs
d cruelty; theſe are all conſiſtent ſuppoſitions, and very far
om being incredible, or unaccountable. But that a perſon
ould pretend to a miſſion from God, himſelf conſcious, at the
me time, that he really had none; that, in order to confirm
ch falſe pretenſions, he ſhould impoſe on the world tricks and
ggles, known to be ſuch, as genuine miracles, and perform
em by a voluntary compact with devils; that in ſuch circum-
nces, he ſhould himſelf live an exactly regular life, and ſteadily
oſecute this one great deſign, the honour of God, and the
od of mankind; that he ſhould inculcate the neceſſity of uni-
rſal goodneſs in others, and, in particular, the obligations of
ſtice, and honeſty, and truth to his neighbour; that he ſhould
ach the doctrines of God's providence, of a future ſtate, and
eternal rewards and puniſhments, as the conſequence of mens
ions, according as their quality ſhould be; that he ſhould
ny himſelf all the worldly advantages which an impoſtor, one
ould think, ſhould chiefly deſign to ſecure; willingly expoſe
mſelf to death for the maintenance of his truth; and, at the
ry inſtant of his expiring upon that account, ſhould call God
Father, and with the greateſt eaſe and aſſurance, commend
s departing Spirit into his hands; that a known, obſtinate,
rdened impoſtor ſhould thus live, and thus die, is one of the
ſt monſtrous, moſt improbable ſuppoſitions in the world.

The abſurdity of ſuppoſing Chriſt's miracles to be diabolical.

" BUT how monſtrous ſoever the ſuppoſition be, may the Jews ſay, your Jeſus can never be that prophet which was to come from God, ſince his religion is contrary to former " revelations;

An objection againſt Chriſt's being the Meſſias.

" revelations: ſince he hath aboliſhed our law, which was con
" feſſedly of divine inſtitution, and by the appointment of it
" author, ordained to endure for ever, and in the room there
" of has ſet up another which we know not whence it is
" [u] God we account immutable in his nature, and wiſe in all his
" purpoſes; but if the goſpel-diſpenſation be from heaven,
" and repugnant to what was once his declared will, at this rate
" of chopping and changing revelations, he has proceeded with
" ſo much levity in the new, or elſe with ſuch weakneſs in the
" old eſtabliſhment, as cannot, without the leaſt degree of igno-
" rance or impiety, be imputed to an all-wiſe, and conſequently
" an unchangeable Being."

Anſwered. THIS is one of the ſtrongeſt objections that the Jews have againſt the divine miſſion of our bleſſed Saviour; and therefore, to give it a full and ſatisfactory anſwer, we muſt remember what has been alledged before, * viz. that the Jewiſh laws were of three ſorts, moral, civil, and ceremonial; that the moral related to the conduct of mens lives, and had a tendency to make them good and virtuous; that the civil concerned the government of the ſtate, and made proviſion for the adminiſtration of juſtice; and that the ceremonial had reſpect to the offices of the church, and were converſant about the rites and ceremonies of religion. The civil or judicial laws, however, are not properly of religious import, and therefore come not under our preſent conſideration; it is the moral and ceremonial about which the controverſy is ſtated; and therefore, though we readily own, [x] that, as they both come from heaven, they were a great bleſſing to the Jewiſh nation, and one of thoſe crowns, as their doctors call it, wherewith they were adorned; though we agree with the commendation which Moſes gives of them; [y] What nation is there ſo great, that hath ſtatutes and judgments ſo righteous, as all this law which I ſet before you? Nay, though we cannot but acknowledge that, as they were the product of divine wiſdom, they could not but be perfect in their kind, fit for the people to whom, and the place in which, and the ends for which they were given, and therefore given with this injunction, [z] Ye ſhall not add unto the word which I command you, neither ſhall ye diminiſh ought from it: though we readily agree to this, I ſay, yet we hope to make it appear, that it is no imputation upon the divine wiſdom to have changed the one, and improved the other.

The original deſign of the ceremonial law

I. THAT the ceremonial part of the law was ordained by God to typify and prefigure the goſpel-ſtate, as well as to make a peculiar diſtinction between Jews and other nations among whom they lived, is what we have elſewhere taken notice of; and from hence we may obſerve, [a] that, if this law was an occaſiona

[u] Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures. * Vid. Vol. II. page 104, 186, 192. [x] Kidder's Demonſtration. [y] Deut. iv. 8. [z] Ibid. ver. 2. [a] Stanhope ibid.

ſional inſtitution only (as it muſt be, if impoſed upon the ews for a peculiar note of diſtinction) this inſtitution muſt ll, when once the occaſion which required it ceaſes; and if it as only typical of ſome future things, the very nature of a pe is, the giving way to the antitype, when once it appears. nd indeed, if we look into the form of theſe laws, and compare em a little with others of a different kind, we ſhall ſoon perive that they were not ſuch as had real and intrinſic worth in em; as made men immediately better, becauſe they were beyed, but ſuch as were therefore obeyed, becauſe they were mmanded; and conſequently, were primarily impoſed, not r themſelves, but for ſome farther end. [b] To what purpoſe the multitude of your ſacrifices unto me, ſaith the Lord? I am ll of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beaſts, nd I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of rams, or of hebats. Bring no more vain oblations; incenſe is an abomination unto me; the new moons, and ſabbaths, the calling of aſemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the ſolemn eeting: but waſh ye, make you clean, put away the evil of our doings from before mine eyes, ceaſe to do evil, learn to o well: For I ſpeak not unto your fathers (ſays he by another rophet [c]) nor commanded I them, in the day that I brought hem out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings, or acrifices, but this thing commanded I them, ſaying, Obey my oice, and I will be your God, and ye ſhall be my people. But ow ſhould this be (ſays the Jewiſh commentator) that God hould not command them concerning ſacrifices, when it is obvius to every reader that a great part of the law is taken up bout them? Why, himſelf reſolves the doubt excellently ell, viz. [e] That God's primary intent, and that which he chiefly ooked at, was obedience, which it was his deſign, in appointing acrifices, and oblations, to teach them.

It frequently diſpenſed with.

AND as this part of the law was not at firſt inſtituted for any ntrinſic goodneſs that it had; ſo may we farther obſerve, that was often diſpenſed with, when the end of its inſtitution ould not be attained. [f] Thus, in the matter of circumciſion, he Jews intermitted it, all the while that they wandered in the vilderneſs, and that not becauſe of the uncertainty of their moion, which always depended upon the ſignal of the cloud that onducted them; but probably, becauſe it might be with ſafety iſcontinued, while they remained in a deſert place alone; and ſo, aving no neighbours to mingle with, were not in danger of hoſe inconveniencies which it was deſigned to prevent. And ndeed, if we look a little farther into the nature of theſe laws, e ſhall find that in their firſt inſtitution they were never degned to be of general uſe, or perpetual obligation. Some of them

Of uſe and obligation to the Jews only.

[b] Iſa. i. 11, &c. [c] Jer. vii. 22, 23. [e] Maimon. More Nev. p. 3. c. 32.

them [k] ſo peculiarly belonged to the Jews, that they could not be ſuppoſed to concern any other nation; ſome were [l] ſo appropriated to the land of Judea, that in any other country the Jews themſelves were exempted from them; and others again ſo confined to the temple of Jeruſalem, that to obſerve them in any other place was reputed no leſs than impiety. [m] To do juſtice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God, were precepts eternally good, and therefore of general obligation; but to have fringes on their garments, or frontlets between the eyes; not [n] to wear a garment of linen and woollen, nor to ſow the ſame ground with divers ſeeds; but to be obliged to repair to Jeruſalem three times a-year, there to keep the ſolemn feſtivals, to eat the peace-offering and firſt-fruits, and the paſchal lamb; theſe were precepts peculiar to that people and place, and not proper to be impoſed upon any other nation. And therefore God, having all along ſignified his deſign of enlarging the boundaries of his church, that [o] pure incenſe might be offered in every place, and his name be made great among the heathen, from the riſing up of the ſun unto the going down of the ſame, did not obſcurely intimate, that theſe ceremonies which made a diſtinction, and, properly ſpeaking, were only practicable by one nation in ſuch particular circumſtances, ſhould be laid aſide, and an inſtitution of a more univerſal comprehenſion ſucceed in its place.

To this purpoſe, even while the law was in its full force, God himſelf expreſsly tells us, [p] that all nations ſhould flow unto him: that he would [q] appoint a prieſt according to the order of Melchiſedeck; [r] take to himſelf prieſts and Levites out of every nation; [s] cauſe the ſacrifice and oblation to ceaſe; deſtroy the city and the ſanctuary; and [t] make a new covenant with the houſe of Iſrael, and with the houſe of Judah; not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, ſays God, in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—but this ſhall be the covenant which I will make with the houſe of Iſrael after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord: I will put my law in their inward parts, and write in their hearts, and will be their God, and they ſhall be my people. [u] Can any one that conſiders the ſtate of things thus deſcribed ever imagine that the Levitical ſervice was calculated for it

Ca

k Thus the paſſover, being appointed in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt, was a peculiar law to that people, who were delivered from thence. l The Jews own that the ſheaf, which was to be reaped, and other firſt-fruits which were to be offered, were to be of the growth of Canaan, as likewiſe the ſhew-bread was to be of the corn of that country. The laws which concern tithes, the ſabbatical year, their year of jubilee, their feſtival rites, their cities of refuge, their expiation of an uncertain murder, and very many others, did all oblige them in their own land. Kidder's Demonſtration.

m Micah vi. 8. n Lev. xix. 19. o Mal. i. 11. p Iſa. ii. 2. q Pſal. cx. 4. r Iſa. lxvi. 21. s Dan. ix. 26, 27. t Jer. xxxi. 31, 32. u Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacræ.

n the covenant of God, made with the Iſraelites, continue, en himſelf expreſsly ſaith, that he would make a new one, on different conditions to what he entered into with their efathers? Was God's worſhip to be confined to the temple at ruſalem, when all the nations of the earth ſhould come to ſerve n? Was the high-prieſt to make an atonement there, when order of prieſthood different from the Aaronical ſhould be up? Muſt the tribe of Levi only attend the temple, when d ſhould take prieſts and Levites out of all nations to admi- ter to him? And what would become of the magnificence d glory of the temple, when both city and ſanctuary ſhould deſtroyed, which was to be within a few prophetic weeks er the Meſſias was cut off?

THESE prophetic weeks have long ſince expired, and the rogation of this law is abundantly notified to the Jews by the ſtruction of their city and temple, and the miſerable diſperſion that people after the promulgation of a new law and cove- nt by Jeſus and his apoſtles. * In ſuch caſes the providence God is the interpreter of his written word; and he cannot ore plainly ſignify the releaſe of any obligation than by mak- the diſcharge of it abſolutely impracticable. The country, hich was the proper ſcene of this religion, ſtrangers do now habit; the city, which all their males were obliged to reſort thrice every year, is now laid waſte; the temple, where the orning and evening ſacrifice was to be performed, is level with e ground, x by the decree and appointment of God, never to built again; and themſelves are ſcattered among other na- ons, without city, without king, without government, without mple, without altar, without ſacrifice; and therefore the law n now be no longer in force, which ſuppoſes the continuance all theſe.

And that they actually have ceaſed, and are never to be reſtored.

* Stanhope's Sermon's at Boyle's Lectures. x Dan. ix. 26, 27. Accordgly, we may obſerve that the Jews have ſeveral times attempted to rebuild eir temple in the reigns of Adrian, Conſtantine and Julian; but have always en defeated. This apoſtate emperor, in particular, out of hatred to the riſtians, gave orders for rebuilding the temple at Jeruſalem, and engaged mſelf to bear the expences; to which the heathens, for the ſame reaſon, did illingly contribute their aſſiſtance; but God did immediately himſelf interſe, and, by a terrible earthquake, threw up the ſtones from the very foundaon, with ſuch violence that they deſtroyed many of the workmen and ſpectars; and, by overthrowing the buildings near adjoining to the temple, killed nd maimed many more of the Jews, who were gathered together for the rrying on of this work: and when, not terrified with this, they again atmpted to lay the foundations of the temple, globes of fire burſting out of the undations, not only deſtroyed the workmen, but devoured the very ſtones. he perſons who relate this are, Ammianus Marcellius [Lib. xiii.] an heathen, d Wagenſel (in his Annot. Ad Excepta Gemaræ, c. 1.) who was a Jew; Nanzen, and Chryſoſtom among the Greeks; St Ambroſe and Ruffinus among e Latins, who flouriſhed at the very time when this was done; Theodoret d Sozomon, orthodox hiſtorians; Philoſtrorarius, an Arian; and Socrates, a vourer of the Novatians, who wrote the ſtory within the ſpace of fifty years ter the thing was done, and whilſt eye-witneſſes of the fact were ſtill alive. d. Whitby's general Preface, Leſlie's ſhort Method, and Jenkins's Reaſon. bleneſs, Vol. II.

The diſtracted circumſtances of the Jews.

IN the Babyloniſh captivity, [y] Jehoiachim their king had his throne, and there were always [z] proper rulers to keep up order and government among them; their genealogies too were preſerved, and the diſtinction of their tribes and families known their deliverance out of captivity, and the very name of a deliverer foretold; and during the whole time of their continuance in it, they had prophets ſent to direct and ſupport them under their afflictions, and to give them aſſurance of a reſtoration: but, in their preſent diſperſion and calamity, there are circumſtances that quite alter the caſe. It is ſubſequent to the publication of the goſpel; it is [b] after the viſion and prophecy had been ſealed up by the coming of the Meſſiah; it is that deſolation which has cauſed ſacrifice and oblation to ceaſe, for theſe ſixteen hundred years and more; it is the only long captivity that never had any time prefixed for their return, never any one meſſage of comfort to ſuſtain the hearts, from the firſt diſmal blow, to this very day; it ſeems to have brought their affairs into ſuch confuſion that their genealogies are perplexed and loſt beyond the poſſibility of a retrieve; inſomuch that they have loſt the pedigree even of thoſe tribes on which the prieſthood was entailed, and from whence the Meſſias was to ſpring; ſo that, upon the ſuppoſition that Chriſt is not yet come, they are in no capacity of knowing when he does come, becauſe they are not able to prove his deſcent according to the prophecies which ſpeak of his coming.

To ſum up then what has been ſaid on this argument: if God, who at firſt inſtituted the ceremonial law of the Jews, did it for particular ends, and with regard to one nation of the world only; if he never intended it to be of univerſal uſe, but even while it was in force, gave ſufficient warning of its approaching expiration; if he all along ſignified his intentions of inſtituting a new religion, which ſhould comprehend all nations, and have its commencement even before the old was totally laid aſide; and if the old of courſe was to be laid aſide, when the people and polity for which it was calculated were diſperſed and diſſolved; and that people and polity have had their ſad fate attending them, without any proſpect of relief or promiſe of reſtoration for above theſe ſixteen hundred years; in vain do they contend that their law is of perpetual obligation, unleſs they could maintain the perpetual poſſeſſion of that land in which it was to be obſerved.

The meaning of the law's abiding for ever.

THE word [*Olam*] which we render for ever, is [c] by the Jewiſh interpreters acknowledged to ſignify, not always an eternity,

[y] 2 Kings xxv. 28. [z] Ezek. viii. 1. Ezra i. 5. which rulers were called *Aichmalootarchai*. [a] Iſa. xliv. 28. Jer. xxv. 12. Dan. ix. 2. [b] Ibid. ix. 24.

[c] R. Joſeph Albo confeſſes thus much, and produces ſeveral inſtances to prove that what is ſaid to be for ever, is to abide for ſome ſtated and fixed time only. Thus, when it is ſaid of the ſervant that he ſhould ſerve his maſter for ever [Exod.

rnity, but very frequently a limited and determinate ſpace of e. The poſſeſſion of the land of Canaan was promiſed them an everlaſting poſſeſſion, and an inheritance for ever; but event has proved that this was to be underſtood in a limited ſe; and the ſimilitude of diction, as well as the nature of thing, obliges us to think that the duration of their law, I an their ceremonial law, was to be no longer than their ntinuance in that land: and accordingly, ſome learned men ve obſerved that where theſe precepts, which are ſaid to be ever, are given, [d] there is ſomething in the very text which termines the utmoſt extent of this expreſſion, and aſſures us at theſe things were to be in force no longer than the Jewiſh te and polity did continue. It cannot be denied indeed, but at before the conſummation of all things, God may bring back e out-caſts of Iſrael, and reſtore them to their native land; t that neither the Levitical worſhip, nor any part of its cere-nies ſhall ever be reſtored again, we have an expreſs pro-ecy, even where this reſtoration is promiſed, to convince us: Turn, O backſliding children, ſaith the Lord, for I am mar-d unto you; and I will take you one of a city, and two of family, and I will bring you to Zion; and I will give you ſtors according to mine heart, which ſhall feed you with know-dge and with underſtanding; and it ſhall come to paſs, when ſhall be multiplied and increaſed in the land, all nations ſhall gathered to the name of the Lord to Jeruſalem. In thoſe ys, ſaith the Lord, they ſhall ſay no more, The ark of the co-nant of the Lord, neither ſhall it come to mind, neither ſhall ey remember it, neither ſhall they viſit it, neither ſhall that done any more: for in the days of the Meſſiah, as [f] ſome of

xod. xxi. 6.] the Targum defines it to the next jubilee, becauſe the year of bilee was the utmoſt extent of that ſervice; and, in like manner, when nnah ſays of Samuel, that he ſhould appear before the Lord, and there abide ever, [1 Sam. i. 22.] the utmoſt extent could be no more than that of his e, or ſo long as he was fit to miniſter legally; whence it appears that the rnal obligation of theſe laws cannot be proved from this expreſſion. Kidder's monſtration. d For theſe laws, which are ſaid to be for ever, are ſaid to be in their generations, and in their dwellings, which two expreſſions reſtrain at indefinite phraſe for ever, and confine it to the Jewiſh country and polity. us the law which forbade the eating of fat, is called a perpetual ſtatute, but n it follows for your generations, and through all your dwellings, Levit. 17. The eating of fat, which was forbid, was the fat of thoſe beaſts which re admitted as ſacrifices, Lev. vii. 23, 25. and when the ſacrifices ceaſed, ich were confined to a certain place, this law ceaſed likewiſe. The law of icting their ſouls on the day of expiation, is ſaid to be a ſtatute for ever, v. xvi. 31. but then it is confined by thoſe expreſſions, in which it is ſaid to a ſtatute to them throughout their generations, and in all their dwellings, v. xxiii. 31. The ſame reſtrictions we find annexed to the laws of the af, of firſt-fruits, Lev. xxiii. 14. of the two wave-loaves, Lev. xxiii. 17, 21. burning the lamps, Lev. xxiv. 3. of blowing the trumpets, Numb. x. 8. of meat and drink offerings, Numb. xv. 15. of the ſervice of the Levites, mb. xviii. 23. of the prieſthood of Aaron, Exod. xl. 15. and of the prieſts ſtaining from wine and ſtrong drink, during the time of their miniſtration, v. x. 9, &c. e Jer. iii. 14, &c. f Vid. Raym. Mart. Pug. Fid. p. 3.

of the ableſt Jewiſh doctors affirm, all ſacrifice is to ceaſe exce praiſe and thankſgiving.

The imperfection of the law,

IT does not indeed become us to cenſure or diſparage a thing that had once the appointment and ſanction of Go [g] but let any indifferent rational perſon take the precepts of t goſpel, and lay them in the balance with thoſe of the cerem nial law, and if he makes any ſcruple of determining on whi ſide the over-weight lies, we may have cauſe to ſuſpect him fo ſaken of that little reaſon which gave him the name of ma Let but the fifth chapter of St Matthew be laid againſt the whol book of Leviticus, and then ſee whether it does not conta precepts more excellent in themſelves, more ſuitable to th divine, and more perfective of human nature. The Pſalmi indeed runs an high commendation on the law, calling it [h] per fect, and pure, and undefiled, converting the ſoul, and givin wiſdom to the ſimple: but then he inſinuates what part of th law it is he means, when [i] in another place, inſtead of outwar waſhings and outward ſacrifices, he offers up his petitions i theſe words; make me a clean heart, O God, and renew right ſpirit within me; for thou deſireſt no ſacrifice, elſe would I give it thee; thy ſacrifice, O God, is a troubled ſpirit, broken and a contrite heart thou ſhalt not deſpiſe.

ſupplied by the goſpel.

IT muſt not be diſſembled indeed that theſe poſitive obſer vances of the Jews were deſigned to recommend moral virtues that their circumciſion repreſented inward purity; their ſacri fices were ſigns of contrition; and their ſolemn feaſts comme morations of the divine bounty; that ſeveral other of thei rites ſuggeſted ſome [k] juſtice and equity, others [l] mercy and humanity, and others again temperance and chaſtity, &c. ye was the ſpiritual meaning hereof ſo deeply laid, that few hav ing the ſagacity to find it out, moſt men contented themſelve with the outward performance. It was however a fit ſchool maſter, as the apoſtle calls it, to bring us to Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by faith, or by the belief and obedience of the goſpel; but after that faith is come, we are no longer under ſchool-maſter. [m] Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we eſtabliſh the law. [n] What wa intrinſically good in the Jewiſh œconomy, is preſerved intire i the chriſtian; what was typical with them is accompliſhed wit us; what was defective there is ſupplied here; and all this i ſuch a manner as we make no doubt was intended from the be ginning; it being reaſonable to ſuppoſe [o] that, when that which was perfect was come, that which is in part ſhould be done a way.

g Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacræ. h Pſal. xix. 7, 8. i Pſal. li. 10, 16, 17. k Such are their laws about cities of refuge, concerning dominion, purchaſing property, treſpaſſes, &c. l Such were the laws about the forgotten ſheaf [Deut. xiv. 28] and the corner of the field, and the third year's tithing, and the increaſe of the ſabbatical year, Lev. xxv. 4, &c. m Rom. iii. 31. n Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures. o 1 Cor. xiii. 10.

y. If then the law be made void by ſuch a faith, it is only ne in the ſame manner as promiſes are made void by being fulfilled; or as images become uſeleſs when their originals are preſent, or as rules for educating children are laid aſide when e heir is of age, and their aim is anſwered.

HAVING thus ſhewn, from the nature and firſt inſtitution of that the changing the commandment contained in ordinances, hich were but a ſhadow of good things to come, can be no putation upon the wiſdom of God, nor any prejudice to our viour's claim of being the true Meſſias; we ſhould now oceed,

II. To obſerve what improvements have been made to the oral part of the law; but this being a ſubject which, in a eat meaſure, has been handled elſewhere, we ſhall only re- ark at preſent that the Jews leaſt of all have reaſon to com- ain of additions of any kind; ſince, without the direction of y prophet, or the teſtimony of any miracle, they have made o ſmall number to their law, even to the utter deſtruction of s true intendment. For how many traditions of their elders o they obſerve, which were never commanded by Moſes, and f theſe ſome flatly repugnant, not only to the laws of God, but the very ties of conſanguinity? What command or direc- on had they for changing the poſture of eating the paſſover, nd putting their own conſtruction upon ſo ſtrict and ſo parti- ular an injunction? By what authority did they add a poſt- œnium to the paſſover, and baptiſm to circumciſion, and ſe- eral other things which are not contained in their law? [r] What God has commanded, man may not add to, nor diminiſh from; ut may not God, who is certainly the judge of his own reve- ation, add or diminiſh what he pleaſeth? May not he, who, o [s] the injunctions he gave Adam added the ſeven precepts of Noah; to theſe precepts added the law of Moſes; and to this aw the meſſages of his prophets; may not he, I ſay, enlarge is will, and by ſlow degrees bring his ſcholars, from the rudi- ents of their nonage, to the higher knowledge of the adult; nd thence [t] to a perfect man, to the meaſure of the ſtature of he fulneſs of Chriſt, as the apoſtle expreſſes it?

That God might make additions to the law.

LET the Jews then make never ſo loud boaſts of the perfec- ion of their law, yet the man muſt be extremely prejudiced who does not perceive its defectiveneſs, in point of aſſiſtance, in oint of pardon, and in point of reward; all which our Saviour n his goſpel has abundantly ſupplied.

1. WE allow indeed that the aſſiſtance of God's bleſſed Spirit lid in all ages attend good men in the diſcharge of their duty, nd that under the diſpenſation of the law, the cleanſing the heart, and renewing the ſpirit within them, was the effect of a divine

As he has done,

[q] Matth. xv. 5, 6. [r] Deut. xii. 32. [s] Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacræ. [t] Eph. v. 13.

divine principle; but then we affirm that this gift of God was arbitrary, imparted to whom and in what measure he pleased; that it was not stipulated to mankind; was no condition of the covenant then in being; what no man was permitted to call upon God for as a right; and what God in those times dispensed with a sparing hand; and therefore we say, that the law was weak, and though it imposed the duty, yet it did not give life and power sufficient to obey.

2. We allow again, that upon the account of their divine institution, the sacrifices under the law might be accepted for the atonement of guilt; but then we say that there were some sins for which there was no atonement allowed, and where the offender, consequently, was left without hope of pardon. All those sins indeed which were committed with an high hand were of this sort; and whatever comfort the sinner that was surprised, or transgressed ignorantly, might conceive, he who was guilty of offences, for which there was no provision made, was left disconsolate and despairing: and though, upon his repentance, he might have recourse to the blood of that Lamb which was slain from the foundation of the world; yet this was a sacrifice he was so little acquainted with, that he could not apply it to the pacification of his conscience.

3. Once more we allow, that the hopes of eternal life were found among some pious and devout Jews; and that, under temporal blessings, especially a land flowing with milk and honey, the joys and happiness of a celestial country were insinuated; [u] but then the earthly Canaan, as one expresses it, lay so fair and open to their prospect, that it easily intercepted the view of the heavenly; and their faith must remove, at least overlook that mountain, before it could come to any sight of the horizon and extended sky; and therefore we need less wonder, that viewing the reward at so tedious a distance, they contented themselves with what lay before them, and were less sollicitous for the future.

in point of the assistance,

These cannot but be reckoned defects in the law; but behold what glorious things we are promised under the gospel-state, in point of assistance! For * after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord. [x] For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and not only so, but [y] I will pour my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy; your old

u Kidder's Demonstration. * Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. x Isa. xliv. 3. y Joel. ii. 28.

men ſhall dream dreams, and your young men ſhall ſee ons. This was actually fulfilled after the deſcent of the ly Ghoſt on the day of Pentecoſt: and though theſe miracu- s gifts were not deſigned to continue in the church any longer n the reaſon and neceſſity of them continued; yet the ordi- y operations of God's Spirit, ſuch as conduce to the illumi- ion of our minds, and the ſanctification of our hearts, are rmanent, and will never fail. Theſe Chriſt has made the rchaſe of his blood: theſe we have actually indented for in e chriſtian covenant; and therefore we have a right [z] to be l by the Spirit, to be kept by grace unto ſalvation, and, in als too difficult for our ſingle ſtrength, may with juſtice re- ire ſuccours and aſſiſtance: upon which account it is that the oſtle aſſures us, that unleſs we are minded to have it ſo, ſin all not have dominion over us, becauſe we are not under the w which requireth obedience, but gave no help to obey; but nder grace, where all aſſiſtance imaginable, comporting with e freedom of our will, is continually afforded us.

2. WHAT glorious aſſurances does the goſpel give us of our rdon, upon terms that are eaſy and reaſonable, and by no means be rejected? For, be our ſins never ſo great, yet, upon our re- entance and ſincere obedience for the future, we are ſure of od's favour and reconciliation; as ſure as [a] the covenant of race, which Chriſt purchaſed by his merits, ſealed by his precious lood, aſſured to us by his reſurrection, confirmed by miracles, roclaimed by his meſſengers, and ſignified to us by his ſacra- ents and holy inſtitutions, can poſſibly make us. St Paul, to ew the extent of evangelical forgiveneſs, gives a dark catalogue f the ſins of the heathen world, that [b] they were fornicators, lolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abuſers of themſelves with ankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, nd ſuch were ſome of you, ſays he; the chriſtian doctrine ound them ſuch, but it did not leave them ſo; for ye are aſhed, for ye are ſanctified, for ye are juſtified in the name of he Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God. For [c] here gain is the ground of our comfort, that if any man ſin (be his n, we ſee, never ſo great) we have an advocate with the Fa- her, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, and he is a propitiation for our ns, and not for ours only, but alſo for the ſins of the whole vorld. And, in point of pardon,

3. WHAT glorious encouragement have we in point of re- ward! When by our bleſſed Saviour, the mediator of a covenant eſtabliſhed on better promiſes, God has [e] brought life and im- nortality to light, which was but obſcurely revealed before; and, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto lively hope, by the reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead, to an inheritance and in point of reward.

[z] Rom. viii. 14. [a] Kidder's Demonſtration. [b] 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, &c.
[c] 1 John ii. 1, 2. [d] Heb. viii. 6. [e] 2 Tim. i. 10. [f] 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for us; enough to engage us to obey all the precepts which our maſter has given us, and to reconcile us to all the labour and difficulty which may at any time attend our performance of them. [g] For eternal life imports more than we can expreſs or comprehend; ſomething more excellent than what our eye hath ſeen, our ear hath heard, or our ſhallow mind is able to conceive. Crowns and ſceptres, feaſts and triumphs, worldly ſucceſs and proſperity, are but little and faint reſemblances of this unſpeakable and inconceivable happineſs which is clearly revealed, faithfully promiſed, and expreſſed in words of the higheſt import, but in ſuch a manner as ſpeaks the thing too big for the expreſſion, and too glorious for the comprehenſion of men, while they [h] dwell in the houſes of clay, whoſe foundation is in the duſt. And ſo we proceed

Jeſus proved to be the Meſſias from his predictions

III. To another argument, proving our Saviour to be the Meſſias, and that is, the truth of his predictions concerning future events. But herein we have ſo far prevented [i] ourſelves already, that we need only obſerve, what is moſt ſuitable to our preſent purpoſe, how punctually his predictions concerning the calamity and deſolation of the Jews were accompliſhed, even according to the account which their own hiſtorian has given us. Our Saviour propheſied that their temple ſhould be ſo totally deſtroyed, that [k] there ſhould not be left one ſtone upon another which ſhould not be thrown down: [l] and Joſephus tells us, that though Titus endeavoured what he could to ſave that ſtately building; though he gave the officers in charge that it ſhould not be demoliſhed, and, even when he ſaw the fire begin to ſeize it, called and beckoned, and commanded the ſoldiers to extinguiſh it; yet they, regardleſs of his commands, went on furiouſly, and animated one another in the deſtruction of it; till it was not only laid level with the ground, but (to have the prophecy verified in the letter) the very foundations of it were plowed up: [m] God himſelf, as Joſephus obſerves, aſſiſting with the Romans to the ruin of it, that the words of Chriſt might not fail of their accompliſhment, [n] he will ſend forth his armies, and deſtroy thoſe murderers, and burn up their city.

Our Saviour propheſied, with the ſame exactneſs and particularity, that their place and city ſhould be ruined and deſtroyed; that [o] their enemies ſhould caſt a trench about it, and compaſs it round, and keep it in on every ſide; that they ſhould lay it even with the ground, and not leave in it one ſtone above another:

g Kidder's Demonſtration. h Job iv. 19. i Vid. Vol. I. page 54. k Matth. xxiv. 2. l De Bello Jud. Lib. VII. m The temple was deſtroyed on the ſame month, and the ſame day of the month, on which it formerly was burnt by Nebuzaradan, the captain of the king of Babylon, which is therefore, by Maimonides, ſtiled the Fatal Day of Vengeance, and by Joſephus [L. vii. c. 26.] is reckoned a matter of juſt admiration, and a plain indication that this ſo happened by a divine appointment. Whitby's Gen. Pref. n Matth. xxii. 7. o Luke xix. 43, 44.

r: and [p] Joſephus tells us, that Titus encouraged his ſoldiers that, in three days time, they built a wall of thirty-nine furgs, with thirteen caſtles on it, round the city; which hindered ſe within from making their eſcape: and that, when he de the aſſault, he gave the ſoldiers orders to dig up the city, l level it intirely; which they executed ſo effectually, that ſe who came afterward to ſee it were of opinion that it uld never be built again.

OUR Saviour propheſied that Jeruſalem ſhould be trodden wn, *i. e.* poſſeſſed and inhabited by the Gentiles: and [q] Joſeus tells us, that Titus commanded the whole land of Judea to ſold to any heathen nation that would buy it; and Hadrian, out ſixty-three years after, as [r] Euſebius tells us, made a law at no Jew ſhould come into the regions round about Jeruſam; ſo that the Jews being baniſhed thence, and other nations cking in, it became perfectly a city and colony of the Romans, d, in honour of the emperor, was named Ælia. Our Saviour opheſied that the calamities of the Jews upon this occaſion ould be ſo very grievous, as to admit of no parallel; that there ſhould be great tribulation, ſuch as never happened from the eginning of the world to that time; that they [t] ſhould be led way captives into all nations; and that [u] wherever the carcaſe as, *i. e.* the nation of the Jews, rejected now, and loathed by od, as a dead carcaſe, there ſhould the eagles, *i. e.* the Roman my be gathered together to prey upon them: and Joſephus lls us, that, as never any people was more wicked, ſo never id a nation ſuffer as they did; for he informs us, * that eleven undred thouſand periſhed in the ſiege; that [x] ninety-ſeven houſand were made captives; and that, when there was no ore left in Judea, [y] many of them were deſtroyed at Alexanria, at Cyrene, and other cities of Egypt, and, to the number f ſixty thouſand, in all the cities of Syria: inſomuch, [z] that all he miſeries which all mankind have ſuffered from the beginning f the world, ſays he, are not to be compared with what the ewiſh nation at that time endured.

OUR Saviour propheſied what were to be the forerunners of his deſtruction; that [a] there ſhould be great earthquakes in ivers places, and in heaven great ſigns, and fearful ſights; and oſephus tells us, [b] that in Judea and Jeruſalem there happened n immenſe tempeſt, and vehement winds, with rain, and frequent lightning, and dreadful thundring, and extreme roarings of the quaking earth, which portended no ſmall miſchiefs; that a ſword ſeemed to hang over the city, and a comet, with its fery tail, pointed down upon it for a whole year; and that, frequently before the ſun ſet, [d] there were ſeen in the clouds,

 * armies

p De Bell. Jud. L. VII. q Ibid. c. xxvii. r Hiſt. Eccleſ. L. XXI. c. vi. L. IV. c. vi. s Matth. xxiv. 21. t Luke xxi. 24. u Matth. xxiv. 28. Lib. vii. c. xlv. x Ibid. c. xliv. y Ibid. c. xxxvi. z Proleg. ad Bell. Jud. a Luke xxi. 11. b Lib. iv. c. xvii. c Lib. vii. c. xxxi. d Ibid.

inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for us; enough to engage us to obey all the precepts which our maſter has given us, and to reconcile us to all the labour and difficulty which may at any time attend our performance of them. [g] For eternal life imports more than we can expreſs or comprehend; ſomething more excellent than what our eye hath ſeen, our ear hath heard, or our ſhallow mind is able to conceive. Crowns and ſceptres, feaſts and triumphs, worldly ſucceſs and proſperity, are but little and faint reſemblances of this unſpeakable and inconceivable happineſs which is clearly revealed, faithfully promiſed, and expreſſed in words of the higheſt import, but in ſuch a manner as ſpeaks the thing too big for the expreſſion, and too glorious for the comprehenſion of men, while they [h] dwell in the houſes of clay, whoſe foundation is in the duſt. And ſo we proceed

Jeſus proved to be the Meſſias from his predictions

III. To another argument, proving our Saviour to be the Meſſias, and that is, the truth of his predictions concerning future events. But herein we have ſo far prevented [i] ourſelves already, that we need only obſerve, what is moſt ſuitable to our preſent purpoſe, how punctually his predictions concerning the calamity and deſolation of the Jews were accompliſhed, even according to the account which their own hiſtorian has given us. Our Saviour propheſied that their temple ſhould be ſo totally deſtroyed, that [k] there ſhould not be left one ſtone upon another which ſhould not be thrown down: [l] and Joſephus tells us, that though Titus endeavoured what he could to ſave that ſtately building; though he gave the officers in charge that it ſhould not be demoliſhed, and, even when he ſaw the fire begin to ſeize it, called and beckoned, and commanded the ſoldiers to extinguiſh it; yet they, regardleſs of his commands, went on furiouſly, and animated one another in the deſtruction of it; till it was not only laid level with the ground, but (to have the prophecy verified in the letter) the very foundations of it were plowed up: [m] God himſelf, as Joſephus obſerves, aſſiſting with the Romans to the ruin of it, that the words of Chriſt might not fail of their accompliſhment, [n] he will ſend forth his armies, and deſtroy thoſe murderers, and burn up their city.

Our Saviour propheſied, with the ſame exactneſs and particularity, that their place and city ſhould be ruined and deſtroyed; that [o] their enemies ſhould caſt a trench about it, and compaſs it round, and keep it in on every ſide; that they ſhould lay it even with the ground, and not leave in it one ſtone above another:

g Kidder's Demonſtration. h Job iv. 19. i Vid. Vol. I. page 54. k Matth. xxiv. 2. l De Bello Jud. Lib. VII. m The temple was deſtroyed on the ſame month, and the ſame day of the month, on which it formerly was burnt by Nebuzaradan, the captain of the king of Babylon, which is therefore, by Maimonides, ſtiled the Fatal Day of Vengeance, and by Joſephus [L. vii. c. 26.] is reckoned a matter of juſt admiration, and a plain indication that this ſo happened by a divine appointment. Whitby's Gen. Pref. n Matth. xxii. 7. o Luke xix. 43, 44.

: and [p] Josephus tells us, that Titus encouraged his soldiers that, in three days time, they built a wall of thirty-nine furgs, with thirteen castles on it, round the city; which hindered se within from making their escape: and that, when he de the assault, he gave the soldiers orders to dig up the city, level it intirely; which they executed so effectually, that se who came afterward to see it were of opinion that it uld never be built again.

OUR Saviour propheſied that Jeruſalem ſhould be trodden wn, *i. e.* poſſeſſed and inhabited by the Gentiles: and [q] Joſeus tells us, that Titus commanded the whole land of Judea to ſold to any heathen nation that would buy it; and Hadrian, out ſixty-three years after, as [r] Euſebius tells us, made a law at no Jew ſhould come into the regions round about Jeruſan; ſo that the Jews being baniſhed thence, and other nations cking in, it became perfectly a city and colony of the Romans, d, in honour of the emperor, was named Ælia. Our Saviour opheſied that the calamities of the Jews upon this occaſion uld be ſo very grievous, as to admit of no parallel; that there ſhould be great tribulation, ſuch as never happened from the ginning of the world to that time; that they [t] ſhould be led way captives into all nations; and that [u] wherever the carcaſe as, *i. e.* the nation of the Jews, rejected now, and loathed by od, as a dead carcaſe, there ſhould the eagles, *i. e.* the Roman my be gathered together to prey upon them: and Joſephus lls us, that, as never any people was more wicked, ſo never d a nation ſuffer as they did; for he informs us, * that eleven undred thouſand periſhed in the ſiege; that [x] ninety-ſeven houſand were made captives; and that, when there was no ore left in Judea, [y] many of them were deſtroyed at Alexanria, at Cyrene, and other cities of Egypt, and, to the number f ſixty thouſand, in all the cities of Syria: inſomuch, [z] that all he miſeries which all mankind have ſuffered from the beginning f the world, ſays he, are not to be compared with what the ewiſh nation at that time endured.

OUR Saviour propheſied what were to be the forerunners of his deſtruction; that [a] there ſhould be great earthquakes in ivers places, and in heaven great ſigns, and fearful ſights; and Joſephus tells us, [b] that in Judea and Jeruſalem there happened n immenſe tempeſt, and vehement winds, with rain, and frequent lightning, and dreadful thundring, and extreme roarings f the quaking earth, which portended no ſmall miſchiefs; that a ſword ſeemed to hang over the city, and a comet, with its iery tail, pointed down upon it for a whole year; and that, frequently before the ſun ſet, [d] there were ſeen in the clouds,

 * armies

p De Bell. Jud. L. VII. q Ibid. c. xxvii. r Hiſt. Eccleſ. L. XXI. c. vi. L. IV. c. vi. s Matth. xxiv. 21. t Luke xxi. 24. u Matth. xxiv. 28. * Lib. vii. c. xlv. x Ibid. c. xliv. y Ibid. c. xxxvi. z Proleg. ad Bell. Jud. a Luke xxi. 11. b Lib. iv. c. xvii. c Lib. vii. c. xxxi. d Ibid.

armies in battle-array, and chariots, as it were, compaſſing the country, and inveſting cities: a thing ſo ſtrange, ſaith he, that it would paſs for a fable, were there not ſtill men living to attest it. Our Saviour propheſied that the period of time, when all theſe things ſhould come to paſs, would be [f] within the compaſs of the generation which was then living: he declared likewiſe the reaſon for which they ſhould befal Jeruſalem, even [g] becauſe ſhe knew not the time of her viſitation, and the things which belonged to her peace; but promiſed withal, ſuch effectual care ſhould be taken, that amidſt this general ruin, [h] his faithful ſervants ſhould be ſaved, and [i] not one hair of their heads periſh. And Joſephus tells us, that, about forty years after Chriſt's death, all this deſolation came upon them; but is very full of this obſervation, [k] that when Ceſtius beſieged them at firſt, he might have taken the city, and put an end to the war; but that God, being angry with them for their wickedneſs, reſerved them for a worſe deſtruction, [l] becauſe they would give no credit to the ſigns which manifeſtly portended their deſolation. Ceſtius indeed, when he came to Jeruſalem, ſoon took the lower city, and might have taken the upper too; but, all on a ſudden, he quits the ſiege without any viſible cauſe, and ſo gave the chriſtians an opportunity to eſcape; whereupon many fled out of the city, [m] ſays the hiſtorian, as from a ſinking ſhip, into the region of Peræa, a deſert and mountainous country, which lying beyond Jordan, and under the government of king Agrippa, was at that time exempted from war.

Once more: our Saviour propheſied, [n] that falſe prophets ſhould ariſe; that they ſhould ſhew great ſigns and wonders; [o] deceive many, and [p] lead their followers into the wilderneſs; but notwithſtanding this, [q] that the goſpel of his kingdom ſhould be firſt preached unto all the world, *i. e.* throughout the Roman empire, for a witneſs to all nations, and then ſhould the end come. And ſo Joſephus tells us, that about this time, [r] an Egyptian, a falſe prophet and magician, got together about thirty thouſand of the Jews; that [s] one Theudas, another magician, who declared himſelf a prophet, deceived many; and that many more impoſtors and magicians perſuaded [t] the people to follow them into the wilderneſs, where they promiſed to ſhew them many ſigns and wonders done by God. By this time, however, the faith of the church of Rome (as St Paul [u] tells them) was ſpoken of throughout the whole world, and * the truth

e Tacitus, a Roman hiſtorian of that age, has in a manner given us the ſame account: Evenerant prodigia, viſæ per cælum currere acies, rutilantia arma, & ſubito nubium igne collucere templum, expaſſe repente delubri fores, & audita major humana vox, excedere Deos, & ſimul ingens motus excedentium. Hiſt. L. V. f Matth. xxiv. 34. g Luke xix. 42, 44. h Matth. xxiv. 13. i Luke xxi. 18. k De Bell. Jud. L. II. l L. VII. c. xxx. m L. II. c. xxxix. n Matth. xxiv. 24. o Ibid. ver. 5. p Ibid. ver. 26. q Ibid. ver. 14. r Antiq. L. XX. c vi. s Ibid. c. ii. t De Bell. Jud. L. II. c. xxiii. u Rom. i. 8. * Col. i. 23.

h of the goſpel (as he acquaints the Coloſſians) was come, to them only, but to all the world, and preached to every ature: for the word of God, as [x] Euſebius relates, ſhone denly upon the world, as a ray of the ſun, and was, on that ount, ſtiled by the very heathens, the prevailing Doctrine. nſidering then the particular manner in which our Saviour dicted theſe events, and the punctual manner, even accord- to the teſtimony of an adverſary, in which they came to paſs, cannot in juſtice but conclude, that he was the great Pro- et ſent from God; ſince [y] theſe events were ſo perfectly con- gent, that no human ſagacity could poſſibly foreſee them, and nſequently, ſuch diſcoveries as could come from none but n, at whoſe diſpoſal all things lie, and with whoſe compre- nſive knowledge the moſt diſtant of them are always preſent.

IV. ONE argument more, proving our Saviour to be the e Meſſias, is the miraculous and ſpeedy propagation of his ſpel. But herein again we have ſo far [z] prevented ourſelves, t we need only obſerve farther, that no other religion what- er had ſo large an increaſe, with ſo little human aid and ſtance, or prevailed in ſuch a manner, as to make a recourſe ſupernatural influences neceſſary, in order to explain the ceſs of it.

Jeſus proved to be the Meſſias, from the ſpeedy propagation of his religion

[a] OF all falſe religions, the Mahometan came neareſt to the riſtian in the ſwift manner of its propagation; for in a ſmall e it over-ran a great part of the Eaſtern world: but this ceſs, how extraordinary ſoever, had nothing miraculous in nothing but what may eaſily be accounted for, by reflecting the circumſtances which attended the propagation of that im- ſture; ſuch as the looſe manners, and lamentable diviſions of e chriſtians of that time; the groſs ignorance which then ounded every where; the ſuitableneſs of Mahomet's doctrine the ſenſual inclination of men, eſpecially of thoſe Eaſtern ople to whom it was firſt addreſſed; and the method he uſed procuring ſubmiſſion to it by the dint of the ſword, not by e power of perſuaſion and argument. A religion that gave ull indulgence to the ambition, the luſts, and cruelty of man- nd, could not fail of gaining proſelytes, and when a warlike d ſavage race of men, united by the hopes of rapine and ſpoil, t upon a diſſolute, divided, and weakened enemy, as the chriſ- ns then were, the ſucceſs of ſuch an enterprize was ſure and ſy; and on the ſucceſs of Mahomet's arms, the ſucceſs of his eligion did depend. When, by an uninterrupted courſe of ctories, he had laid the foundation of the Saracen empire, it as no wonder that a new empire ſhould be able to introduce a ew religion: the increaſe of the one was naturally followed by proportionable enlargement of the other: but this, as I ſaid, had nothing

The Mahometan religion.

[x] Hiſt. Eccleſ. L. II. c. iii. [y] Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures. Vid. Vol. I. page 59. [a] Biſhop Atterbury's Sermons, Vol. I.

nothing miraculous in it; nothing that rivalled, or any way resembled the ſucceſs of the goſpel, [b] that ſtone, which was cut out of the mountain without hands, *i. e.* without viſible cauſes or inſtruments proportioned to ſuch a work, and brake in pieces all other kingdoms, and, at laſt, became itſelf a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

The Jewiſh religion. THE Jewiſh religion indeed was inſtituted by God; but it will admit of no compariſon with the chriſtian, either as to the manner of its firſt reception, or the addition of converts which were afterwards made to it. It was given to the Iſraelites by Moſes, in the wilderneſs, whither he led them, out of the houſe of bondage, in their way to a land flowing with milk and honey. Now, ſetting aſide the conſideration of miracles (by which the Jewiſh and chriſtian diſpenſations were alike confirmed) the reception of the law by the Iſraelites from ſuch a deliverer, under whoſe conduct and command they then intirely were, and in a place where they had no communication with the reſt of the world, had nothing in it near ſo wonderful as the firſt plantation of the chriſtian church, by means of the apoſtles preaching. Nor was the acceſſion of Gentile-converts, after the tabernacle was ſet up at Shiloh, ſo conſiderable, as to give the religion of the Jews any title or pretenſion to a divine original on that account.

THE narrow limits of the Jewiſh church are thus, under the emblem of a tranſplanted vine, aptly repreſented by the Pſalmiſt: [c] Thou haſt brought, ſays he, a vine out of Egypt; thou haſt caſt out the heathen, and planted it; thou preparedſt room for it, and didſt cauſe it to take root, and it filled the land, viz. the land of Jewry, wherein it was ſet. The hills, *i. e.* the hilly country of Judah, the fartheſt part of Paleſtine ſouthward, were covered with the ſhadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the cedars of God, on mount Lebanon, in the extremity of its northern borders: ſhe ſent out her boughs into the ſea, the Mediterranean ſea, her utmoſt limit to the Weſt, and her branches to the river, even as far eaſt-ward as the river Euphrates. Thus was the Jewiſh church, even in its largeſt and moſt flouriſhing condition, ſhut up within the bounds of Canaan and the countries adjacent: whereas [d] that muſtard-ſeed, the kingdom of Chriſt, [e] though it were leſs than all the ſeeds that be in the earth, yet, when it was ſown, it grew up, and became greater than all herbs, and ſhot out branches, and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it; men of all countries and all religions under heaven flocked to it for ſhade and ſhelter.

THE

b Dan. ii. 34, 35. c Pſal. lxxx. 8, &c. d Luke xiii. 19. and Mark iv. 31, 32.
e The Jews give a wonderful account of the growth and increaſe of this ſeed, viz. that there was a ſtalk of muſtard ſeed in Sichim, from which ſprang out three boughs, one of which being broke off, covered the tent of a potter, and produced three cabs (every cab about three pints and an half) of muſtard ſeed. Whitby on Matth. xiii. 32.

THE truth is, the Moſaic law was intended for a ſingle people , who were to be ſhut in from the reſt of the world by a e of legal rites and typical ceremonies, and by that means to ain ſeparate and unmixed till the great antitype, the Meſ- ſhould appear, and break down this fence, and lay open this loſure, publiſhing a religion of a more extenſive nature and which all mankind ſhould be invited to profeſs, and in ich all ſhould have an equal intereſt. [f] Whereunto there- e ſhall we liken the kingdom of God, and its marvellous in- aſe? Or with what compariſon ſhall we compare it? There ndeed ſome faint reſemblance of it in the prodigious fecundity ſeeds, which accordingly our Saviour makes uſe of more than e to illuſtrate it; but there is nothing parallel to it in the tory of all the religions which have obtained among men from beginning of the world to this day.

" BUT though the propagation of the goſpel was wonder- ful, yet why ſhould it be accounted miraculous? Wonderful it was indeed, as every unuſual thing is to thoſe who do not know or conſider the cauſes of it: but to a man who dares to go out of the common road, and think for himſelf, it will appear that there was, at that time, a ſet of natural cauſes on foot, ſufficient to account for this effect, without any re- courſe to a divine and ſupernatural agent. The apoſtles in- deed were twelve plain illiterate men, who had neither force nor ſkill of themſelves to bring about ſuch an event: but their natural inability was ſupplied by a favourable juncture; by an happy coincidence of ſuch conſpiring cauſes, and acci- dental advantages, as mightily helped on the work. [g] The ſufferings of thoſe poor bigotted creatures, the martyrs, made a mighty impreſſion upon the common people, who never fail to take the ſide of the oppreſſed, and to think the cauſe good, be it what it will, for which they ſee people badly treated; the purity of the chriſtian morals was a great inducement to men of probity and virtue; the analogy of ſome of its myſtical truths to the doctrines of Plato, then in vogue, was a bait to men of philoſophy and learning; the diſtribution of goods, which was cuſtomary among the firſt chriſtians, was a ſtrong temptation to the meaner ſort; and the oracles, at this time happening to ceaſe, and the Jewiſh ſtate to be diſſolved, turned to the advantage of the chriſtian religion, and contributed not a little to the increaſe of its numbers. Mean while, the rulers of the world overlooked and neglected to cruſh a doctrine ſo harmleſs in itſelf, and ſo unlikely to ſucceed on the account of its abettors, till, by their connivance, it was at laſt univerſally received by the vulgar ſort, and the number of its votaries was grown ſo

" formidable,

An objection.

That the propagation of the goſpel might come about by natural means.

f Luke xiii. 18. g Biſhop Atterbury's Sermons, Vol. I.

" formidable, that even princes themſelves were forced, " their own eaſe and intereſt, to come into it and profeſs it."

Anſwered particularly.

IT cannot be denied indeed but that every one of theſe particulars might, in a natural way, contribute ſomewhat either to the planting or ſpreading of the goſpel; but that all of them together could not do the thouſandth part of the work that is here allotted them, will beſt appear by examining them ſeverally. The blood of the martyrs was indeed, what it hath oft been ſtiled, the Seed of the Church; but this could not be at the time when thoſe martyrs ſuffered, ſince nothing could have a greater tendency to frighten men from profeſſing the goſpel than to find that they ſhould be perſecuted, and muſt die for it. This only then can be the meaning of the ſaying, that the ſufferings and torments, which the firſt chriſtians underwent ſo willingly and bravely, were a ſtrong evidence of the truth of the doctrine which could inſpire its followers with ſo much courage and conſtancy, and diſpoſed men mightily to embrace the religion of Chriſt afterwards, in better and more quiet times: but before the time that this motive could have any influence, the goſpel had already ſpread, and ſettled itſelf every where. The purity of the chriſtian morals, and the anſwerable lives of chriſtian converts, did indeed very naturally lead men to admire and value the doctrine of Chriſt, but by no means to come under its yoke: for though moſt men have an eſteem for ſtrict rules and ſtrict livers, yet few care to practiſe the one, or imitate the other; and therefore a religion which required of all its proſelytes to renounce their deareſt paſſions and appetites, was, upon this account, more likely to deter than allure men to the profeſſion of it: and, in like manner, the analogy of ſome of its myſtical truths to the doctrine of Plato, as it was an argument calculated to touch but few, only the philoſophers of the academic ſchool; ſo it ſeems improbable that it ever ſhould have weight enough to out-balance the ſcorn and contempt with which they treated the chriſtian religion, for its unphiloſophical way of propounding truths, without demonſtration; and the promulgers of it, for their apparent ignorance and want of education: and though the charitable diſtribution of goods, or having all things in common among the primitive chriſtians, may be thought a motive ſomewhat adapted to the meaner ſort; yet even this could be of no great influence, ſince there was ſomething in the chriſtian religion of far more force to affright, than this to engage them, viz. the ſtrict rules of honeſty and temperance, according to which they were bound to live; and the great calamities and perſecutions they were ſure to undergo.

WE allow indeed, that had the ceſſation of oracles been imputed to its right cauſe, and known to be the effect of the promulgation of the goſpel, this would have been of uſe towards bringing the heathen world to the acknowledgment of Chriſt; but

this cauſe, at that time was not conſidered, as is evident
that celebrated diſcourſe in Plutarch concerning this very
ect; where, among many reaſons for that ceſſation, he never
mentions that of Chriſt's coming: and though the deſtruc-
of the Jewiſh ſtate brought in ſome converts to chriſtianity,
his happened late, forty years after our Saviour's death;
the advantage which his cauſe gained by the compliance of
e few was more than out-done by the harm occaſioned by
obſtinacy of others, who, not content to reject his religion
nſelves, made it their buſineſs to expoſe and ridicule it among
heathens, in all the countries into which they were driven.

WELL then, the chriſtian religion, from ſmall and weak
innings, ſpread itſelf far and wide, after a ſudden and ſtrange
ner; and this it did, contrary to all the rules of ſucceſs
ch all other riſing opinions ever ſet up with. It was mark-
out for deſtruction in its infancy, and by the early perſecu-
s of Nero, we may learn, that the powers of this world did
overlook it, but were eagerly bent upon its extirpation:
ad none of thoſe advantages which recommend every new
that ſtands and prevails; and as for all other leſſer helps and
tances towards its increaſe which the wit of man can aſſign,
y are apparently too weak to ſuſtain the weight that is laid
n them. It remains therefore, that this wondrous effect
ng undoubtedly from the immediate influence of God, ſtir-
g up the minds of men to attend to, and diſpoſing their hearts
mbrace the truth of the goſpel; actuating, after an extra-
inary manner, the induſtry, and bleſſing the endeavours of
apoſtles; and, in ſhort, accompanying all they ſaid and did
h mighty ſigns and wonders, with the demonſtration of the
rit, and of power.

AND hence probably we may perceive the reaſon why the
vidence of God did not ſuffer human learning, or the civil
wer to come in to the ſupport of chriſtianity, the one not till
leaſt an hundred, and the other not till three hundred years
r Chriſt, viz. that the eſtabliſhment of our faith might ap-
r manifeſtly to be the immediate work of heaven, and not
ing to human means, or any ſet of natural cauſes. The
ſtles themſelves confeſs, and glory in confeſſing, that as they
ach the doctrine of Chriſt, in the moſt ſimple and artleſs
nner, not with excellency of ſpeech, or the enticing words
man's wiſdom; ſo the firſt converts whom their labours
ught over to the faith were generally mean perſons of no
uired knowledge, no rank, no education. Eccleſiaſtical
ory tells us, that for near three hundred years after Chriſt,
Roman emperor embraced the faith, though there were ſe-
ral of them men of great moral virtues, and not far from the
owledge of God, as to their perſonal qualifications and cha-
racters;

Why learning and the ſecular power were not employed in the propagation of the goſpel.

racters; and yet it pleaſed the divine providence, that even th
good emperors, inſtead of embracing and protecting the fa
ſhould diſcourage and perſecute it, that the kingdom of Chr
which was not of this world, might not be beholden to any
the kingdoms of this world for its eſtabliſhment. [i] For you
your calling, ſays St Paul, how that not many wiſe men ar
the fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but G
hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wi
and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, a
baſe things of the world, and things that are deſpiſed, hath
choſen, yea, and the things which are not, ſuch is the leſſen
phraſe of the apoſtle, to bring to nought things that are, th
no fleſh might glory in his preſence, *i. e.* that he might have
rivals, no ſharers in the glory of this event. For though t
apoſtles, to whom St Paul alludes, were deſtitute of every
compliſhment that might recommend them to the world; [k] y
ſuch was the power of God working in them, that the moſt c
lebrated philoſophers, and the moſt eloquent orators, were no
all of them together, ſo perſuaſive as one of the leaſt of thei
They enlightened mens underſtanding; convinced their judg
ments; baffled whole ſynagogues; ſtruck an awe into courts
judicature; confounded gainſayers; charmed enemies; co
verted kingdoms; ſubdued and reformed a corrupted world
and were the only perſons that ever triumphed over the diſa
vantages of long-rooted prepoſſeſſions, implacable malice, a
general contempt. In deſpite of all theſe, and without any ar
ful inſinuations, their authority and commanding influence wa
ſuch, that their followers were content, not only to believe
but to ſacrifice their eſtates, their reputation, their liberty, the
lives; and to ſtake down their ſouls, their all, upon the credi
of theſe new teachers, and in confidence that the Jeſus, who
they preached to them, was the prince of life, and the autho
of eternal ſalvation to thoſe that laid hold on him.

The ſum of the whole argument.

To ſum up the evidence then of this whole argument. I
God did all along promiſe, and promiſe in an abſolute and uncon
ditional manner, that in the fulneſs of time, he would ſend
perſon of peculiar eminence, called the Meſſias, to redeem lo
mankind from the captivity of ſin and Satan; if, at the tim
when Jeſus of Nazareth (whom we chriſtians account th
Meſſias) came into the world, there was an univerſal expecta
tion, both among Jews and Gentiles, of this great perſon, t
make his appearance; if, according to ſome famous prophecie
which limit his coming to ſuch a certain period, this Saviour o
the world is, in all probability, come, becauſe this period is un
doubtedly paſt, and no reaſon can be aſſigned for his longe
delay; and if all the prophecies which diſtinguiſhed the Meſſia
in all the circumſtances of his life, and ſufferings, and exaltation
according

[i] 1 Cor. i. 26, &c. [k] Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures.

rding to their true ſenſe and interpretation, do fairly meet, are fully comprehended in our Jeſus; if the miracles, which wrought, are ſo great in their nature; the prophecies, ch he told, ſo certain in their event; and the doctrine, which aught, ſo wonderful in its propagation, that nothing but the ne omniſcience and omnipotence could have effected theſe; n is the conſequence, I think, undeniable, ſince we are not ſuppoſe that God will aſſiſt an impoſtor, that the perſon who ght this doctrine predicted theſe events, wrought theſe won- s, and in whom all the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, ating to the Meſſias, do exactly centre, is in reality what he tended to be, that promiſed Meſſias which was to come into world; ſince there never was, nor ever can be another in whom ſe diſtinguiſhing characters did, or can, at any time, meet.

Reaſons why our Saviour was not owned to be the Meſſias.

ut then, "If there is ſuch plain evidence of our Saviour's being the true Meſſias, it ſeems a wonderful, may ſome ſay, and almoſt an incredible thing, that not only the Gentiles, but the Jews likewiſe, who had ſuch remarkable means and opportunities of conviction, ſhould ſo univerſally reject him." d therefore, to ſatisfy this ſcruple, we ſhall endeavour to e ſome account of the cauſes of their unbelief, beginning with e Gentiles.

By the Gentiles from their philoſophy.

I. OF what avail ſoever the philoſophy, which, in the begin- ng of chriſtianity, was current in the world, might be towards fining the notions, and adorning the minds of men; yet the oſtle ſeems to ſignify, that it was far from being of any ſervice fit and diſpoſe them for the reception of chriſtianity, or to eſerve its purity after it was received; and therefore his ad- onition is, [m] Beware leſt any man ſpoil you through philoſo- y, and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudi- ents of the world, and not after Chriſt; as knowing very ell that the opinions of the ſeveral philoſophers then in vogue d no kindly aſpect upon the faith of Chriſt. [n] The Epicu- ans, a confident and vain ſect, would (as the apoſtle knew by perience) hear nothing of a reſurrection, and future life, the eat principles of chriſtianity, without a preventing deriſion d contempt. [o] The Peripatetics were perſuaded that the orld was eternal, and therefore laughed at thoſe who pre- nded to teach that it was not far from its end, and had its be- nning not many thouſand years ago. The Pythagoreans were ry ſuperſtitious, and apt to aſcribe every thing to magic, and ſides, ſo blindly devoted to their maſter's dictates, that they garded no reaſons or arguments againſt them; and (to name more) the Stoics, who, by the help of the chriſtian ſyſtem, d mightily improved the moral part of philoſophy, were ſtrange- erroneous in this, that they believed nothing immaterial,

l Jenkins's Reaſonableneſs, Vol. II. m Col. ii. 8. n Acts xvii. 18, 32.
Jenkins, ibid.

which was a plain contradiction to the fundamental doctrines of christianity. Thus, one way or other, the philosophers and learned part of the world, besides the common prejudices of other men, had prepossessions peculiar to their opinions, which hindered them from embracing christianity; and, as their philosophy was apt to affect the praise and admiration of men, to foster pride and self-conceit, and was indeed [p] an artifice and disguise only, to conceal the worst of vices under a morose look, and an habit different from other men; so it set them at a farther remove still from the reception of a religion which calls upon them to be [q] meek and humble, and poor in spirit; [r] in lowliness of mind to prefer others before themselves; and [s] in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, to have their conversation in this world.

Their prejudices.

NOR was this repugnancy of tenets and temper the only obstruction found among the Gentiles, but even the poor and persecuted condition of the christians deterred and prejudiced them against a new religion which would necessarily expose them to sufferings, out of a principle of fondness which men naturally have for ease and safety. They considered therefore, that their own religion was the religion of their country in which they might live without trouble or molestation, and to which the honours and emoluments of the state were annexed: they alledged, that this had been the religion of their forefathers, under the influence of which the Roman empire had arrived at so much power and greatness; and they ascribed [t] all the calamities which befel the world by famine, earthquakes, or pestilence, to the neglect of their own worship, and the progress of the christian religion; and in consequence of these errors and prejudices, they despised christianity before they had any knowledge of it. Nay, some of their learned men were so little acquainted with it, [u] that they did not distinguish its professors from Jews, nor knew the right pronunciation of the very word * Christ, or Christian; which made the antient apologists so frequently complain, that their adversaries persecuted what they did not understand; and so earnestly desire, that their religion might be impartially inquired into, and themselves allowed the justice and opportunity of a fair hearing.

And other incidental things.

THERE were some other incidental things which contributed to the heightening these prejudices of the heathens. The Jews not

p Vid. Quintil. Inst. Lib. i. c. 1. and Senec. in Exhortationibus apud Lactant. Lib. iii. c. 15. q Matth. v. 3, 5. r Phil. ii. 3. s 2 Cor. i. 12.

t This was so much insisted upon, as it is to be seen in Zosimus, Symmachus, and others, that Orosius set himself to answer it in a particular work, and St. Austin, who put him upon writing it, thought himself concerned, in his own works, to oppose so unreasonable, but fatal a prejudice, as Arnobius had done before. Jenkins's Reasonableness, Vol. II. u Vid. Sueton. in Claudio, c. 25.

* For so in Suetonius [c. 25.] we find it wrote Chrestus, and Chrestianus, whereupon Tertullian [in his Apol. c. 3.] has the remark, nam nec nominis certa est notitia pænes vos.

only [x] blaſphemed Chriſt in their ſynagogues, but [y] ſent n (as we ſaid before) on purpoſe, from Jeruſalem into all parts of the world, to vilify him and his religion. The etics, which ſoon ſprang up in the church, by their abo- nable doctrines and practices, brought [z] a general ſcandal on chriſtians, as being ſuppoſed all of one profeſſion, and ſo nfirmed men in the ill opinion which they had already con- ved of them. The Chriſtians themſelves, by their diſcourſes l writings concerning Chriſt's kingdom, gave umbrage to oſe that were glad of a pretence againſt them, that they in- nded to ſet up a temporal kingdom by rebellion. Their ſer- nts, [a] being examined before magiſtrates, and telling that ey had heard their maſters ſpeak of the communion of the dy and blood of Chriſt, gave riſe to the ſtory of their devour- g human fleſh and blood; and ſome vile women at Damaſcus, reatened with torments, unleſs they would confeſs that they ere chriſtians, which confeſſion was publiſhed in all cities and her places, gave their enemies an occaſion to charge them ith all manner of wickedneſs and groſs impiety.

Several heathens of great note, admirers of chriſtianity

BUT how much ſoever theſe arts and accidents may be ſup- oſed to prejudice mankind againſt chriſtianity; yet they did not far prevail, but that, in early days, we find ſome of the great- t names in the Gentile world, though they did not actually ecome chriſtians, entertaining juſt and favourable opinions of at religion. Of Alexander Severus [b] it is reported, that he ad the effigies of Chriſt in his chapel; that he deſigned to have rected a temple for the worſhip of him; and inſerted his name mong the heathen gods: of Arian, that with the ſame inten- on, he commanded temples to be built in all cities without mages, but was diſſuaded from it by ſome about him, who, aving conſulted the oracles, were told, that this would be the ay to make all men become chriſtians: of Valerian, that in the eginning of his reign he was ſo favourable to chriſtianity, that is palace, being full of devout worſhippers, was, as it were, he church of God, as [c] Dionyſius of Alexandria ſtiles it: and uring the interval between the perſecution of Gallienus, and hat which began in the nineteenth year of Diocleſian, that hriſtians were in the higheſt ſtations and employments; that heir number increaſed daily, and magnificent churches were rected, where their congregations, which were now become xceeding large, publicly reſorted.

By the Jews.

II. THERE is the ſame to be ſaid of the Jews, concerning he cauſes of their infidelity. [d] Their law, as it came from God, was

x Cui [Chriſto] ter, per ſingulos dies, ſub nomina Nazarenorum maledicunt, in ſynagogis ſuis, Hier. ad Iſa. xlix. 7. y Juſt. Martyr Dialog. z Thus Celſus makes objections from the erroneous and wicked notions and practices of the Ophitæ, the Valentineans, the Marionites, and others. Orig. contra Celſum, Lib. vi, &c. a Irenæi Fragm. apud OEcumen. Comment. in 1 Pet. iii. b Æd. Lampid. in Alex. Severo. c *Kai pas ho oikoſtaytou theoſeboon pepleroo-to, kai en ekkleſia Theou.* d Jenkins's Reaſonableneſs, Vol. II.

was held in ſuch eſteem and veneration, and their traditions, deſcending (according to their notion) from the ſame original were ſo punctually obſerved, that whoever ſhould go about to weaken or repeal any of theſe, were ſure to meet the expreſſe of their indignation. Their fixed expectance of the Meſſiah in the pomp and character of a temporal prince, made them think the meanneſs of our Saviour's condition, and the ignominy of his death ſufficient to overthrow all the arguments that could be brought in confirmation of his title; and their having ſlain the Lord of life, and being frequently upbraided with it by the apoſtles, put them upon the neceſſity, either of acknowledging their crime, which few are diſpoſed to do, or of vindicating the thing with more obſtinate reſolution and outrage, which ſeems to have been their caſe in the martyrdom of St. Stephen: for, upon his having charged them with the murder of Chriſt, and declaring his exaltation to God's right-hand, [e] they cried out with a loud voice, and ſtopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and caſt him out of the city, and ſtoned him.

THERE were other circumſtances, moreover, which ſeemed not to favour the reception of the goſpel. For, beſides that falſe Chriſts, and falſe prophets, [f] with their ſigns and wonders, were then very frequent, inſomuch, that if it had been poſſible, they would have deceived the very elect; and that the Jews were much more inclined to give credit to theſe, who complied with their luſts and deſires, than to examine and conſider the evidence of a religion, which muſt have obliged them to take up the croſs, and follow a crucified Saviour: beſides this, I ſay, [g] the nation at this time was ſo very wicked, that, according to the judgment of their own hiſtorian, had not the Roman army come, the earth would have ſwallowed up the city, or a deluge deſtroyed it, or fire from heaven, like Sodom, conſumed it. No wonder then, that, among ſo wicked a people, who by their impieties had fortified themſelves againſt conviction, ſo [h] that their eyes were blinded, and their hearts hardened; that they ſhould not ſee with their eyes, nor underſtand with their heart, and be converted; converſions ſhould not be ſo general, and [i] that the goſpel ſhould be hid to them that were loſt, in whom the god of this world had blinded their minds, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them.

Many Jews converted.

BUT theſe impediments notwithſtanding, it muſt be allowed, that many Jews and proſelytes were very early converted to the chriſtian faith; that [k] Simeon (ſuppoſed to be the Rabbin [l] Simeon,

e Acts vii. 57, 58. f Matth. xxiv. 24. g Joſeph. de Bell. Jud. Lib. ix. h John xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 26. Rom. xi. 8. i 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. k Luke ii. 25, 36. l The title of Rabbin, was the higheſt of all titles, ſignifying a Prince, rather than a Doctor or Teacher, as Rabbi doth, and there were but ſeven of the poſterity of Hillel, whoſe family was the greateſt in all Judea, that were dignified with it. Jenkins's Reaſonableneſs, Vol. II. Ex Buxtorf. de Abbrev. Heb.

n, the ſon of Hillel, and the father of Gamaliel) and Anna
prophetess, acknowledged, and adored our Saviour in his
ncy; that Nicodemus, Joſeph of Arimathea, and ſeveral
r names of note and eminence, ſoon after the preaching
, received the chriſtian faith; that [m] about three thouſand
e converted at one time; [n] five thouſand at another; and
[o] believers were daily added to the Lord, even multitudes
of men and women; [p] that a great number of Grecians,
Jews, ſpeaking the Greek tongue, at Antioch; [q] a great
titude of devout Greeks, *i. e.* proſelytes of the Gates, at
eſſalonica; a great company [r] at Iconium; and [s] all that
elt at Lidda and Saron, turned unto the Lord; nay, that not
y the people, but [t] prieſts alſo became chriſtians; ſeve-
[u] of the ſect of the Phariſees; * Criſpus, a ruler of the
agogue; Soſthenes, [x] another chief ruler; [y] Apollos
eloquent man, and mighty in the ſcriptures; and [z] ma-
more, not mentioned in the ſacred records, became great
enders of the faith; inſomuch, that [a] the number of them
t were ſealed, very early in the church, was an hundred and
ty and four thouſand, of all the tribes of the children of Iſrael.

The cauſes why the preſent Jews are not converted to chriſtianity.

IF it be farther inquired, why ſo many of the Jews, even in
iſtian countries, live unconverted, now in the bright ſun-
ne of the goſpel, and when many of their old prejudices are
noved; there are ſundry reaſons, both on their ſide and ours,
t may account for this infelicity, and faults on both, that
ght to be amended, and which, for a concluſion of this chap-
, I ſhall take the freedom but juſt to ſuggeſt.

WHEREAS the Jews of old were careful in the preſervation
the holy ſcriptures, and extremely cautious againſt any adul-
ation of them; there are ſome great preſumptions to think,
t ſince the coming of our Saviour Chriſt, they have altered,
d corrupted the very text in thoſe places, which ſpeak of the
eſſias, and the particular time of his coming; however, this
nnot be denied, that the loſs of the vowels in the Hebrew
nguage has made it very ambiguous: and therefore, whereas,
ſupply this defect, the Greek tranſlation of the LXX (highly
commended,

m Acts ii. 41. n Ibid. iv. 4. o Ibid. v. 14. p Ibid. xi. 21. q Ibid. xvii. 4.
bid. xiv. 1. s Ibid. ix. 35. t Ibid. vi. 7. u Ibid. xv. 5. * Ibid. xviii. 8.
bid. xviii. 17. y Ibid. xviii. 24.

z Epiphanius, who himſelf was brought up in the Jewiſh religion, acquaints
, that Ellel, the Jewiſh patriarch, ſent for a biſhop to baptize him, upon his
ath-bed. Samuel Morochianus, Petrus Alphonſus, Rimundus Martini, Paulus
rgenſis, Nicholas de Lyra, Alphonſus de Zamora, Petrus Galatinus, Sextus
nenſis, Johannes Iſaacus Levita, Tremellius, and other learned men, edu-
ted in the Jewiſh worſhip, upon their converſion, have been eminent defen-
rs of the chriſtian religion. But it is obſervable, that the Rabbins of the
eateſt note and authority with the Jews, Maimonides, Solomon Jarchi, Aben
ra, and David and Joſeph Kimchi, flouriſhed in the moſt ignorant and cor-
pt ages of the chriſtian church, when chriſtians, by their ſuperſtitious and
roneous doctrines, and wicked lives, had brought their religion into contempt,
th with Jews and Mahometans, who, at that time, were more learned, than
any other age. Jenkins, ibid. a Rev. vii. 4.

commended, and ſuppoſed to be even of divine inſpiration (the antient Jews) was publicly read in their ſynagogues, b ſince the coming of our Saviour, has been diſuſed, and a ſp ous one of Aquila (who was an heathen, a chriſtian, and a J made in the manifeſt decay of the Hebrew tongue, ſet up in ſtead, for no other reaſon, but becauſe the former gave flagrant teſtimonies of our Saviour's being the Meſſias: whereas the antient Jews built their faith upon the authority the ſcriptures, the notoriety of the facts, and the impoſſibil of an impoſture, the modern ground all upon the tradition their fathers, and by that means, preclude themſelves from poſſibility of being converted; "[b] becauſe their fathers, th "ſay, having told them, that the things, related in the goſp "were not ſo done, as they are related, they are bound to b "lieve them upon their ſole teſtimony, be the contrary eviden "never ſo convincing."

WHEREAS Philo, and the Jews before him inſiſt much up the typical ſenſe of the law, and their Cabbala makes the ou ward precepts, but the cortex, or ſhell, as it were, of the hidd myſteries, which they contain; their later authors, finding ho this inward and ſpiritual meaning relates to the Meſſias, and accompliſhed in our Saviour, deny that there is any type at in the law, or that the office of the Meſſias extends to a heavenly and ſpiritual acquiſitions, but to worldly ſucceſſes a conqueſts only. Whereas the conſtant tradition of the antien was, that the Meſſias would ſhew himſelf to the world, a vouch his commiſſion by exhibiting miracles; the notion of ſom moderns, to elude the demonſtration of our Saviour's wonderf works, is expreſſed in theſe words, that [c] there is no oth miracle needful for the Meſſias, but only one, viz. to gather t Jews out of all the countries of the world, to reſtore the thro of David to its antient and greater majeſty, and to bring a kings and nations to the worſhip of the true God. Once more whereas the world before Chriſt, never dreamed of more th one Meſſias, how various and different ſoever his offices a adminiſtrations might be, to anſwer the two ſtates of ſufferi and triumphing, foretold of the Meſſias, and fulfilled in ou Saviour, the Jews of late have invented a new, and ſtran conceit of two Meſſias, one to die, and the other to conque though there be no footſteps of this in all antiquity, nor a poſſibility of crediting the [d] monſtrous ſtory they tell about

b Leſlie's ſhort Method. c Limber collat. cum Jud.

d The ſtory which Hornbeck [cont. Jud. p. 253] relates, out of their auth Aukat Rochel, de ſigno Meſſiæ ſeptimo apud Hulſium, p. 51. is this——Th ſuppoſe, that a company of profligate fellows will invent a new ſin; that th will take a beautiful ſtone ſtatue of a woman that is in Rome, and warmi it, will lie with it; that from thence it will conceive, and at laſt burſti there ſhall come forth a child, whoſe name ſhall be called Armillus; that ſhall be twelve cubits high, and the length of a ſpan between his eyes; th

ever therefore the Jews would put themſelves in a capacity arch out truth, they muſt reſolve to lay aſide their coun- it hiſtory, and corrupt chronology, which they have endea- red to impoſe upon the world; and more eſpecially, their laws, and traditions of ſuppoſed credit, contrived on pur- to evacuate the written word of God, and the evidence ch it produces againſt them. They muſt have recourſe to law, and to the teſtimony, and to the moſt natural and ob- us interpretations of theſe; [e] for if they ſpeak not according he word, it is becauſe there is no light in them; and, inſtead unting after ſuch ſhifts and evaſions, as ſome modern doctors e deviſed on purpoſe to maintain a ſhattered ſcheme, comply h the advice which God gives them; [f] ſtand ye in the ways, ſee, and aſk for the old paths, where is the good way, and lk therein, and ye ſhall find reſt for your ſouls. When the ws are once come to the reſolution of making the holy bible rule of their faith, it may not miſ-become them, to enter- n more charitable thoughts of thoſe, who differ from them in tters of religion; to conſider, that ſo great a body, as chriſtians ke, men of ſufficient ſagacity in other affairs, and remarkable ough in moſt parts of human literature, may poſſibly be in the ht; at leaſt, that it may be worth their pains, to make the al, whether they be or no; that, in the main, theſe chriſtians men of probity and ſincerity, and ſuch, as it would not ll become the goodneſs of God, in a matter of ſuch infinite portance, to ſuffer to be led away with a common deception; d upon this preſumption, they ought to perſuade themſelves to deſiſt from reviling the name of Jeſus (who poſſibly may no impoſtor) in their books, and curſing his diſciples (who ſſibly may not deſerve it) in their daily prayers.

What is requiſite on their parts.

WHEN this is done, it may not perhaps be amiſs, in order to eate a jealouſy in themſelves whether they are in the right or , to reflect a little on the diſtreſſed condition they are in; how ttered and diſperſed over the face of the earth; debarred from eir antient land, the land of promiſe; and in no nation, where ey ſojourn, allowed the leaſt power, or ſhadow of government: at in this diſorder, they have loſt all their records and genea- gies, ſo that, if the Meſſias be not yet come, they cannot diſ- cover

will ſay to the wicked, I am your Meſſias, and your God; that they will be- eve in him, and make him their king, and that to him will be gathered all e poſterity of Eſau. That their firſt Meſſias, Ben Joſeph, of the tribe of phraim, will fight againſt him with 30000 Iſraelites, and ſhall have ſucceſs the firſt battle; that, in the ſecond battle, he ſhall be killed, and his army uted; but angels ſhall take away his dead body, and keep it with thoſe of e patriarchs; That, after this, ſhall ariſe their ſecond Meſſias, Ben David, the tribe of Judah, and Elias with him, to whom the Jews, that are left, all be gathered, and oppoſe Armillus; that God will deſtroy Armillus, and s whole army, by fire and brimſtone, and great ſtones caſt down upon them om heaven. With abundance more of the like mad excurſions of imagina- on. Leſlie's ſhort Method.

e Iſa. viii. 20. f Jer. vi. 16. g Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures.

cover him when he does, or trace the lineage from whence he is to ariſe. They ſhould remember, that [h] in all their captivities, the time of their redemption was foretold, and prophets were all along ſent from God, to revive their drooping hearts with the expectation of it; but that ſixteen hundred years and more are now expired, without any glimpſe of hopes, or proſpect of end, or meſſage of comfort to refreſh them. Falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets indeed they have had enough, but theſe have drawn ſo much ruin and deſtruction upon them, as ſhould make them weary, one would think, of deluding themſelves with any farther expectation: but, above all, they ſhould remember, that their temple is deſtroyed, and with it the morning and the evening-ſacrifice ceaſed; ſo that now they are under a curſe and condemnation for every tranſgreſſion of their law, but have no atonement for their guilt, or expedient to pacify their conſciences: and yet, to be left in this forlorn condition, would hardly be reconcileable to the goodneſs and holineſs of God, had not he ſet forth [i] Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, for a propitiation, and in him opened a fountain for ſin and for uncleanneſs.

THEIR deſtitution of theſe things therefore does, in ſome meaſure, point them to Jeſus, and ſhould diſpoſe them, with meek and unprejudiced minds, to ſearch the ſcriptures which teſtify of him; to compare the prophecies in the Old, with the accounts of him in the New Teſtament; and to read the apologies, both antient and modern, which ſet this controverſy in a clear light. By the help of theſe, together with their fervent prayers to God, that he would enlighten their minds, to the acknowledgment of the truth, it is ſcarce to be doubted, but that after ſome inquiry, they would come to perceive the reaſonableneſs and certainty of the chriſtian religion; that [k] all things which were written in the law, and in the prophets, and in the pſalms, concerning the Meſſias, were fulfilled in our Jeſus, and that, according to the wiſeſt ſcheme of man's redemption, it behoved him to ſuffer, and to riſe from the dead, and to enter into glory, and that repentance and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached in his name.

What is requiſite on the part of chriſtians.

WE indeed, who are to aſſiſt in this bleſſed work of their converſion, have not thoſe extraordinary gifts of power and utterance which enabled St Peter, the apoſtle of the Jews, in one ſingle diſcourſe to convert [l] three thouſand of his brethren; and have little or nothing of that zeal, which encouraged St Paul, the apoſtle of the Gentiles, to take ſuch a large compaſs in his travels, and to run through ſuch a [m] ſcene of perils and perſecutions, for the ſalvation of ſouls. [n] Thoſe who are ready

h Leſlie's ſhort Method. i 1 John ii. 1, &c. Zech. xiii. 1. k Luke xxiv. 26, 44, 46, 47. l Acts ii. 41. m 2 Cor. xi. 23, 24, &c. n There is this reaſon offered, why the church of Rome ſhews ſo much concern for the converſion of other nations, and at the ſame time, is ſo negligent of the Jews. If they could convert

dy enough to compaſs ſea and land, to gain any other ſort of ſelytes, ſeem to be cold and indifferent, in relation to the ient people of God. The fear of idolatry, ſo expreſsly for-den in the law, is a great ſtumbling-block in ſome places; and others, the want of a regular conſtitution, with governors l laws, with promiſes and privileges of their own in a church, es no ſmall offence: nay, even in this country, where no ſuch ſtacle is complained of, there is neither that • care taken by public, nor that application uſed by perſons of capacity, as great affair of converting the brethren of the circumciſion ſt certainly does require. We diſpute one againſt another h great heat and animoſity; we do it about trifles, concern-rites and modes of worſhip, about decrees and the divine ſcience, about things that we do not underſtand, and in ich we may ſafely be on the wrong ſide; here we are fierce d paſſionate, fond of our ſeveral opinions, and uncharitable to e another: in the mean time, in the main controverſy between and the Jews, we are cold and indifferent, as if the ſkirts d fringes of religion were of greater care to us, than the als and power of it. In other differences, the queſtion is ny time ſuch, that we may be miſtaken, and yet ſafe; but if are wrong in this diſpute, we err fundamentally, and muſt ver hope for ſalvation. And therefore it nearly concerns us know on which ſide the truth lies; and if we are fully con-

nvert any Pagan or Infidel nation, they might from thence have a conſider-le acceſſion to their church, both of glory and revenue; but alas! the Jews a ſcattered and peeled people: their converſion therefore would add no w territory, or country, or revenue, or preferment. So that, if all the Jews Rome were converted, the church's patrimony would not be enlarged by it; tribute given, for leave to live quietly in the pope's territories, would be t, and the poor, who muſt be maintained, increaſed. But if this be the aſon, I am ſure it is abhorrent to chriſtianity. Biſhop Kidder's Demonſtra-n of the Meſſias.

o What would be proper for the public to do, upon this occaſion, we find the ove-named biſhop expreſſing in theſe words: "Though I am not againſt the liberty allowed to the Jews of reading their law, and uſing their prayers and hymns, in their ſynagogues; yet I humbly offer, that all chriſtian princes and ſtates ſhould not permit this liberty without ſome reſtraint. It is not reaſonable, that they ſhould have liberty to curſe chriſtians, under the name of Edomites or Minim, *i. e.* Heretics, to blaſpheme the holy name of Jeſus, or do any thing reproachful to our religion, either in the public offices, or private converſation; which is not only immoral in itſelf, but contrary likewiſe to the very letter of their law: and though I am not for compelling the Jews to turn chriſtians, yet chriſtian kings and ſtates may oblige them to hear our ſermons, and admit of our conferences: they may oblige them to appear either before them, or their commiſſioners, at certain times, and by their Chacams, or wiſe men, to exhibit their reaſons in writing, why they continue in Judaiſm, and reject chriſtianity. Theſe papers they may order to be delivered to ſuch learned men, as are fit to draw up an anſwer to them, which may be returned to the Jews, and they obliged to return a reply to them, in ſuch a determinate time. After which, a public confe-rence may be appointed, and the Jews permitted to defend themſelves, and anſwer ſuch chriſtians, as ſhall be deputed to diſpute with them, with free-dom and ſincerity, and without any manner of moleſtation." Biſhop Kid-der's Demonſtration of the Meſſias *ad finem*.

vinced that it is on ours, and have a ſufficiency of knowled and learning for the purpoſe, our next care muſt be, [p] in mee neſs to inſtruct thoſe that oppoſe themſelves, if God peradve ture will give them repentance, to the acknowledgment of t truth: ſhewing them, [q] that, ſince there is no living witho committing offences, and thereupon being culpable before Go there muſt of neceſſity be ſome atonement, or expiation to qui the mind, and ſet the conſcience at eaſe; that ſince all inſtitute means of that nature are ceaſed among the Jews, there is n atonement to be expected, but what the Meſſias was to mak as is predicted, and ſet forth in holy writ; and thereupon evi cing that Jeſus is that Meſſias, by all the arguments that prov the divine miſſion of Moſes, and ſuch as have been the ſubje of this diſcourſe. This while we are labouring to do, we ſhoul make it our hearts deſire, and prayer to God, that he woul remove from them all hardneſs of heart, and contempt of hi word, that they may be ſaved among the number of tru Iſraelites; and for our own encouragement, call frequently t mind, that they, who are inſtruments in ſo good a work, [r] ſha ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament, and as the ſtars fo ever and ever.

CHAP. V.

Of CHRIST's Commiſſion to his Apoſtles.

The extent of the commiſſion.

THE laſt thing that we find our Saviour doing, before hi aſcent into heaven, is his giving a commiſſion to hi apoſtles; which deſerves a particular conſideration, becauſe on depends all that power and authority, all thoſe rights and pri vileges, all thoſe offices and adminiſtrations which the apoſtle themſelves, and after them, their ſucceſſors claimed and exe cuted in the chriſtian church.

THE form of the commiſſion runs thus;— [a] Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and o the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, teaching them to obſerve al things, whatever I have commanded you. [b] Whoſe ſoever ſin ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoſe ſoever ſins ye retain, they are retained: for as my Father ſent me, even ſo ſend I you. The whole ſtreſs and purport of the commiſſion lies in theſe laſt words, which may very properly be extended to theſe ſeveral ſenſes.

I. As my Father ſent me from heaven to declare his will and to make choice of you to be my meſſengers and apoſtles ſo

p 2 Tim. ii. 25. q Kidder's Demonſtration of the Meſſias, *ad finem*. r Dan xii. 3. a Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. b John xx. 23.

ſend you into the world to preach the goſpel, and to gather ether my church out of every nation.

II. As my Father ſent me to appoint you my ſucceſſors, to y on the work of the goſpel, when I am gone; ſo I ſend to ordain your ſucceſſors, that there may not be wanting and proper miniſters in the church upon your demiſe.

III. As my Father ſent me to acquaint you with the offices, are to execute in the future adminiſtration of the church; I ſend you to inſtruct your ſucceſſors in the nature of ſacer-al function, to acquaint them with the powers and miniſtries onging thereunto; and in what manner they are to behave vards the people committed to their charge.

IV. As my Father ſent me with full power and authority make laws for the good government of the church, and to lige mankind to the obſervance of them; ſo I ſend you, with like authority, to make ſuch orders and conſtitutions, to ap-int ſuch rites, and impoſe ſuch cenſures, as ſhall be thought nducible to the ſame end. And,

V. As my Father ſent me from his boſom with a full aſſu-nce of his love and paternal care; ſo I ſend you and your ceſſors, with the like promiſe of protection and aſſiſtance, and ccеſs in your labours; for [c] lo, I am with you always, even nto the end of the world.

The firſt branch of the apoſtles commiſſion to gather a church.

I. ONE branch then of the apoſtles commiſſion was to teach, make diſciples of all people, and to collect a church out of very nation upon earth. [d] The ſynagogue of the Jews indeed nſiſted but of one country, to which the public worſhip of od was confined: [e] in Judah he was known, and his name as great in Iſrael; at Salem was his tabernacle, and his dwell-g-place in Sion; [f] his word he ſhewed unto Jacob, and his dgments unto Iſrael; but he did not deal ſo with any other ation. The temple was the only place in which the ſacrifices ould be offered, in which the prieſts could perform their office f adminiſtration; ſo that under the law there was an enclo-re, as it were, dividing a particular nation from all the world eſide. But when God gave [g] the heathen to his Son for his nheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for his poſ-eſſion; when Chriſt [h] ſent his apoſtles into all the world to reach the goſpel to every creature; the church, which in its rimary inſtitution was of a diffuſive nature, ſoon ſpread and xtended itſelf from the city of Jeruſalem, where it firſt began, o all the parts and corners of the earth.

The church

IN the city of Jeruſalem we read that there were twelve poſtles, together with the diſciples, and, before the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, that [i] the number of the names together were bout an hundred and twenty. When the Holy Ghoſt miracu-louſly

Its riſe and nature.

c Matth. xxviii. 20. d Pearſon on the Creed. e Pſal. lxxvi. 1, 2. f Ibid. xlvii. 20. g Ibid. ii. 8. h Mark xvi. 15. i Acts i. 15.

louſly deſcended upon the apoſtles, and St Peter thereupo preached to the Jews that [k] they ſhould repent, and be baptize in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, for the remiſſion of ſins; it is ſa that they who received the word were baptized; that the ſam day there were added unto them three thouſand ſouls; an that theſe continuing ſtedfaſtly in the apoſtles doctrine and fe lowſhip, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers, were the fir who had the title of CHURCH conferred on them. [l] Fro hence we may obſerve what this original church was, viz. certain number of men, of which ſome were apoſtles, ſome th former diſciples, and others, perſons who repented and believe in the name of Chriſt, and continued with one heart, and on ſoul, hearing the word preached, receiving the ſacraments ad miniſtred, and joining in the public prayers preſented unto God And from this account of its riſe and beginning, we may define the church in all ages to be a ſpiritual ſociety, joined to Chri their head by the ſame faith, and offices of religion, and to on another by the ſame love and charity.

Its regularity.

ST PAUL, to ſhew the regularity of this ſociety, and how they are united to one another by the ſtricteſt bands and term of communion, has employed a great variety of alluſion and compariſons to repreſent it by. [m] He ſometimes borrows a illuſtration from a civil body, when he calls it [n] a family, a city, a kingdom, whereof Chriſt is the head and governor; ſometimes from an artificial body, when he compares it to building fitly framed, and to a [p] ſpiritual houſe, raiſed upon the foundation of the apoſtles and prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner-ſtone: but what is the moſt lively com-pariſon of all, is that which he borrows from a natural body; [q] Chriſt, ſays he, is the head of the church, and we being many, are one body in him, and every one members one of another: into him therefore we are to grow up, who is the head, and from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and com-pacted by that which every joint ſupplieth, according to the effectual working in the meaſure of every part, maketh increaſe unto the edifying itſelf in love.

NOW the deſign of the apoſtle's uſing theſe alluſions and al-legories is to teach us, that the church, as it ſignifies the true myſtical body of Chriſt, is and can be but one; becauſe the ſame terms of uniting members into it have always been, and always will continue unalterable. This is the ſame family, and city, and kingdom, unto the rights and inheritance, the privileges and immunities of which, mankind in all ages, and all places, are admitted. [r] This is the ſame body in which all members are united; and the ſame houſe and temple in which all the living ſtones

k Acts ii. 38. &c. l Pearſon on the Creed. m Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels, Vol IV. n Heb. iii. 6. Eph. iii. 14, 15 o Heb. xii. 22. p Eph. ii. 20, 21. q Ibid. iv. 16. r Stanhope ibid.

s are compacted; and therefore, howſoever we may read veral churches in the ſcriptures and elſewhere; yet theſe nly ſo many diſtinct parts of the univerſal church; they ll members of this body, all appartments of this great e, all companies of this populous city: and though they nſidered as ſeparate, with regard to the places where they ituate, the limits of their dominion, their temporal conſti-ns, and ſeveral juriſdictions; yet ſtill they are but one in main, and can no farther deſerve the title of churches, than ey agree in all eſſential points with the univerſal church, ſed over the face of the whole earth.

ND as the church of Chriſt is one regular ſociety; ſo, in very deſign and inſtitution of it, it cannot but be of a ſpi-al nature. [t] The Jews indeed, who explained the prophe-which ſpake of the Meſſiah's kingdom in ſuch a ſenſe as a-ed beſt with their own prejudices, conceived that their ſſias was to be a glorious temporal monarch, who ſhould lue the Romans, and reſtore to them their antient laws and rties: and therefore they alledge that Jeſus, by declaring ſelf to be the Meſſias, was a profeſſed enemy to the Roman ernment: upon which crime they arraigned him before Pi-, and told the governor plainly, [u] that if he acquitted him, was not Cæſar's friend, becauſe whoſoever made himſelf a g, ſpake againſt Cæſar. He cleared himſelf however of this ſation, by declaring himſelf indeed to be a king, but one of uite different order to that which his enemies ſuggeſted; Ay kingdom, ſaid he, is not of this world; if my kingdom e of this world, then would my ſervants fight that I ſhould be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from ce. Which anſwer, in the governor's opinion, ſo fully aſ-ed him from any effectation of ſecular empire, that * when had ſaid this, Pilate went out to the Jews, and ſaid unto m, I find in him no fault at all. Spirituality.

ALL power indeed, both in heaven and earth, is given unto riſt, as he is our mediator; but then this power is of a very ferent nature, exerciſed in a different manner, and for quite ferent ends from thoſe powers which are claimed by the civil giſtrate. The enemies, which by this power as ſoldiers of riſt, we are to fight againſt, [x] are not fleſh and blood, but ncipalities and powers, the rulers of the darkneſs of this rld, and ſpiritual wickedneſs in high places; and the armour ich we are to wield upon this occaſion, is [y] the armour of ht, [z] the girdle of truth, the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs, e ſhield of faith, the helmet of ſalvation, the ſword of the rit; for [a] the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. The rights

[t] Archbiſhop Potter of Church Government. [u] John xix. 12. [w] John xviii. * Ibid. ver. 38. [x] Eph. vi. 12. [y] Rom. xiii. 12. [z] Eph. vi. 14, &c. [a] Cor. x. 4.

rights which this power is designed to secure, are of a differ sort from our civil rights and liberties; they are such as Gre and barbarians, bond and free, they who have civil rights, a they who have none, are all capable of enjoying; for [b] all them are one and the same in Christ Jesus. The laws enac by this power, though the greatest security to the civil gover ment, are of a different nature to its ordinances, since these a designed only to maintain the outward peace and prosperity the world; whereas the end of the other is to promote o everlasting happiness: and, lastly, the rewards and punishmen whereby this power enforceth its laws are spiritual and future and such as in this life can only influence men by means of the faith; whereas those which belong to the civil power are ca culated for this life only, and, if they do not reach us here, c never affect us at all.

Visibility. BUT though the kingdom of Christ is plainly distinct from a worldly kingdoms, and the graces whereby our inward com munion with Christ is maintained, are invisible; yet it will n therefore follow that the christian church is not an outward an visible society. For when we read how [c] Paul and Barnab were brought on their way by the church; how the elders Ephesus were commanded [d] to feed the church, whereof the were overseers; and, in case of [e] trespass between brother an brother, how we are to tell it to the church, and if the offende neglects to hear the church, he was to be looked upon as a heathen: when we consider that public rulers were appointe to govern this church; that public worship was to be frequented and public sacraments administred in it; and that heretics an other notorious offenders, [f] after the first and second admoni tion, were to be rejected out of it; we cannot but conclud that this church must be an outward and visible society, whos privileges and offices some men were admitted to, and other excluded from: and if the church of Christ be a visibl society, it may not be improper here to inquire, by what mean we become and continue members of the same.

Baptism the means of admitting us into the church. NOW the sacraments whereby we are at first incorporate into the church of Christ, is declared in scripture to be baptism for [g] by one spirit we are all baptized into one body. This i an ordinance which, as we shewed [h] before, our Saviour too from the Jews, and in this new religion appointed to be th only form of admitting us into the number of his disciples: an therefore vain and presumptuous is the delusion of those who because they call Christ Lord, and pretend to an uncommon mea sure of the spirit, arrogate to themselves the name and privi leges of christians, without this initiating sacrament of baptism which he hath ordained as the instrument of making them members

b Gal. iii. 28. Col. iii. 11. c Acts xv. 3. d Ibid. xx. 28. e Matth. xviii. 15, &c. f Tit. iii. 10. g 1 Cor. xii. 13. h See Vol. II. p. 495.

bers of his viſible body. For that the baptiſm of the ſpi- be it what it will, was ever intended to ſuperſede the ob- ance of this ordinance, is manifeſt from a paſſage in ſcrip- which cannot be gain-ſayed. Among the acts of the tles we read, that when Peter, who was ſent for to Cor- us to inſtruct him in the chriſtian faith, and preaching to the pany which was convened upon that occaſion, [i] the Holy oſt fell upon all them that heard him, in the ſame manner t did at its firſt plenteous effuſion on the day of Pentecoſt. t now, what is St Peter's inference from this miraculous nt? Is it that the perſons to whom it happened were ſuffi- ntly illuminated already, and had no need of outward bap- n? No: but that this was an evidence of God's approbation them as fit objects of baptiſm; and accordingly he aſks, an any man forbid water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized, ich have received the Holy Ghoſt as well as we. So far is baptiſm of the ſpirit, even where it is undeniable from ex- ding the baptiſm of water, or any of the extraordinary me- ds of grace, from intending to break in upon and overturn regular orders and eſtabliſhments of the church.

AND as baptiſm is the proper means whereby we are made mbers of the church, ſo the two great ligaments which com- ct and continue us in this myſtical body, are [l] faith and [m] love; th, or the profeſſion of the goſpel-truths as it is oppoſed to reſy; and love, or continuance in communion and church- llowſhip, as it is oppoſed to ſchiſm. For ſo the apoſtle re- ires, that we ſhould both [n] hold faſt the form of ſound words hich was delivered to the ſaints; and [o] that we ſhould keep e unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace. But here it is pro- r to obſerve, that as the profeſſion of all the truths in the oſpel is not made the condition of our continuance in the urch, ſo neither is our deviation from ſome to be accounted character of hereſy in us. [p] Conſidering indeed the nature nd corruption, the ignorance and frailty, the avocations and advertencies, the miſtakes and different capacities and intereſts f men, we have reaſon to think that it is ſo far from being ne- eſſary, that, ordinarily ſpeaking, it can hardly be conceived oſſible, how any great number of men ſhould intirely agree in he ſame perſuaſion, as to ſeveral matters relating to religion: nd therefore, ſince all points of faith are not of equal impor- ance and concern, it ſuffices that thoſe which are of the foun- ation, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, ſuch as the being of a God, the octrine of the Trinity, the divinity and ſatisfaction of Chriſt, his eſurrection, aſcenſion, and coming again to judgment, the im- ortality of human ſouls, the reward of heaven, and the tor- ments of hell, be firmly believed, and ſtedfaſtly continued in by every

The means of our continuance in it, faith and love: and in what ſenſe.

i Acts xi. 15. k Ibid. x. 47. l 1 Tim. i. 4. m Eph. iv. 16. n 2 Tim. i. 13. o Eph. iv. 3. p Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels, Vol. IV.

every chriſtian. He that denies any of theſe articles indeed truly an heretic: but we cannot, and muſt not, give him name who is erroneous in ſome leſſer matters of chriſtian and diſſents from the church in propoſitions of a lower natu ſuch as admit of ſome diſpute and debate, but do not prope belong to the ſubſtance of faith and manners.

In like manner we are to obſerve, that as our obligation church-communion is no where delivered in abſolute and conditional terms; ſo there may frequent occaſions ariſe, wh ſeparation, or abandoning communion on religious account not only lawful, but even neceſſary and indiſpenſible. For thou a church, as [q] a great defender of our own ſays, may w nothing neceſſary in its conſtitution, yet if it requires me profeſs, againſt my conſcience, that I believe ſome error, thou never ſo ſmall and innocent, which I do not believe, and w not allow me her communion, but upon this condition; in th caſe, the church, for requiring this condition, is ſchiſmatic not I, for ſeparating from it. But where this is not the ca where all doctrines neceſſary to ſalvation are taught, and no u lawful terms of communion are impoſed, there the apoſtle exhortation moſt certainly takes place: [r] I beſeech you, brethre by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye all ſpeak th ſame thing, and that there be no diviſion among you, but th you be perfectly joined together, in the ſame mind, and in th ſame judgment; which he only can be ſaid to do, who hold communion with the particular church, and paſtor, to which h regularly belongs. For, [s] ſince every particular is a branch o the univerſal church; it is only thus, and by the like gradua progreſſions (beginning from the union of ſingle perſons, unde their reſpective guides, and, riſing from particular congregations to diſtricts of larger extent and denomination) that we come a laſt to the union of each part with the whole body of chriſtians, diffuſed all the world over; and that we are able to ſhew, how he, who is regularly joined to one, by virtue thereof, is joined t the other alſo.

The means of union between diſtinct churches.

There can be no diſpute then, concerning the obligation o private chriſtians, in regard to the unity of the church; but it h not thought ſo eaſy a matter to determine, in what manner unity is to be maintained between particular diſtinct churches (eſpecially in different countries, which have no claim of power over one another) in order to make them members of the ca-tholic church. [t] For the reſolution of this point however, it may not be improper to obſerve, 1. That it is neceſſary, the inſtituted order of governors in the church of Chriſt ſhould be ſtrictly obſerved in every church: otherwiſe, if he, who is or-dained to the ſacerdotal office, and has a right to exerciſe it in one

q Chillingworth's anſwer to Charity maintained. r 1 Cor. 1. 10. s Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels, Vol. IV. t Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. I.

communion, be reputed no more than a layman in another, unity of the church in general muſt neceſſarily fall to decay. That the governors of the church, though diſtant in place, independent as to their ſeveral juriſdictions, ſhould agree in h fundamentals of worſhip and diſcipline, that they may ely communicate with one another, as often as occaſion offers. d, 3. That, as the eſſential laws of the church are enacted Chriſt himſelf, in the obſervance of which, all the members, d particularly all the paſtors of it are to unite; ſo great care ould be taken, [n] that all occaſional laws, and local rules of cipline be conformable to, and genuine deductions, as it were, m the great and fundamental ones, which Chriſt himſelf hath t. By this means we ſhould have the ſame form of govern- nt, the ſame orders of clergy, the ſame number of ſacraments, d the ſame terms of communion in every church, though in untries of never ſo diſtant ſituation, cuſtoms, and languages. nd that theſe were the bands of unity between church and urch, in the primitive times, is apparent from the * canonical iſtles (as the antients call them) wherewith perſons are wont be furniſhed, when going from one place to another; and hereby clergymen more eſpecially, removing into any other untry or dioceſe, were, by the biſhop, who ordained them eſtifying the ſoundneſs and orthodoxy of their faith, as well the innocence and unblameableneſs of their lives) recom- ended to the biſhop of the place whither they are going, to be mitted to the exerciſe of their miniſterial function, which, ſoon as they exhibited ſuch letters, they immediately entered pon; though it is difficult to imagine, how they could have done

[n] There are other rules, which ſome have thought proper for the preſerva- on of the church's unity, viz. 1. That religion be not clogged with ceremo- es, which, when multiplied too much, even though they be lawful, eat out e heart, and life, and vigour of chriſtianity. 2. That nothing of this kind be etermined, but what is ſufficiently known to be indifferent in its own nature, nd impoſed only, in order to the due performance of what is generally required y the word of God. And, 3. That no ſanctions be made, nor mulcts or penal- es inflicted on ſuch, as only diſſent from the uſe of ſome things, whoſe lawful- eſs they at preſent ſcruple, till ſufficient time be granted, and means be uſed or their information of the nature and indifferency of the things, that it may e ſeen whether it is out of wilful contempt, and obſtinacy of ſpirit, or only eakneſs of conſcience, and diſſatisfaction concerning the things themſelves, hat they diſobey. Stillingfleet's Irenicum.

* Theſe epiſtles were chiefly of three kinds. 1. *Eirenikai*, letters of peace nd congratulation, which one biſhop ſent to another, by ſuch of the clergy, s were going into diſtant dioceſes, in order to maintain a good concord and greement between them. 2. *Apolytikai*, letters demiſſory, whereby leave was given to perſons going into another dioceſe, either to be ordained by the iſhop of the place; or, if ordained already, to be admitted and incorporated nto the clergy of that church. And 3. *Syſtatikai*, letters commendatory, which were granted to the clergy, when they went into another dioceſe, that they night be employed in the office whereunto they had been ordained; or granted o all, whether clergy or laity, who were going to travel, as Tickets of Hoſpi- ality, that wherever they came, upon producing theſe letters, they might be known to be catholic and orthodox, and as ſuch received and entertained. Cave's Primitive Chriſtianity, Part III.

done this, had not the terms of communion, the orders a
ſacraments, and other miniſtrations been alike in all churches

The ſecond branch of the apoſtles commiſſion to appoint proper officers in the church.

II. ANOTHER branch of the commiſſion which our Savio
gave his apoſtles; was, that they ſhould ordain proper officer
to adminiſter the affairs of his church. That they were
along, from the firſt beginning of the world, perſons appr
priated to the ſervice of God in matters of religion, [x] is manife
from the firſt and patriarchal œconomy, when the miniſterial
ſacerdotal power was veſted, not in the community, but in ſele
perſons, and every patriarch was the ſacrificer in his reſpecti
family, as may be gathered from ſundry paſſages in the ſacr
records. After the publication of the law, and when the prie
hood came to be more particularly and diſtinctly ſettled, th
public miniſtry of the church was confined to one tribe only
nor durſt any intrude into the leaſt part of the ſacerdotal offic
without a proper deſignation. When the chriſtian religion ap
peared in the world, the evangelical miniſtry, was at firſt wholl
ſeated in Chriſt alone; but neither [y] did he, as the apoſtl
argues, glorify himſelf, to be made an high-prieſt, but he, tha
ſaid unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee
After that our Saviour had publicly entered upon the work
which he came into the world to do, he firſt choſe [z] twelv
apoſtles, and afterwards [a] ſeventy diſciples, to whom he gave
commiſſion to preach the goſpel, and to perform all other acts
relating to the chriſtian miniſtry. It is to be obſerved likewiſe,
that one he refuſed, viz. the ſcribe, who ſaid unto him, [b] Maſter,
I will follow thee, whither ſoever thou goeſt; and that another,
whom he called, would not follow, viz. the rich young man, to
whom he ſaid, [c] Sell all that thou haſt, and give it to the poor,
and come and follow me; which plainly ſhews, that all men
were not alike fit for the kingdom of Chriſt, nor capable of being
his diſciples.

Miniſters always a diſtinct body of men, ſhewn from the apoſtles practice,

AFTER Chriſt's departure, the firſt thing of this kind, which
the apoſtles did, was to chuſe one, who might ſucceed in the
place, which Judas had forfeited, and they appointed two,
Juſtus and Matthias, and [d] prayed, ſaying, Lord, thou knoweſt
the hearts of theſe men, ſhew whether of theſe thou haſt choſen,
and they gave forth their lots, and their lots fell upon Mat-
thias. After this, we find them inſtituting deacons, who, though
they were certainly the loweſt order of the church, were never-
theleſs not to be taken out of the promiſcuous multitude. They
were to be [e] men of honeſt report, and full of the Holy Ghoſt:
and though the brethren preſented them, [f] yet the apoſtles
were

x Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. y Heb. v. 5. z Luke vi. 13. a Ibid.
x. 1. b Matth. viii. 19. c Ibid. xix. 21, 22. d Acts i. 23, 24, &c. e Ibid. vi. 3, &c.
f Upon this occaſion, I cannot but take notice of a vile forgery, which is
crept into very many editions of the Engliſh Bible, eſpecially, ſince the be-
ginning of the great rebellion. St Luke tells (Acts vi. 1.) that when the num-
ber

e the perſons, who actually approved of them, and, by the oſition of hands, empowered them, whom they thus ordain- not only to act under them, as miniſters in taking care of the r, but alſo to baptize new converts, as we ſee St Stephen erwards did at Samaria.

IF ever any man had a miſſion from heaven to preach the pel, it was St Paul; ſo that he, who declared himſelf to be apoſtle, not of men, neither by men, but immediately from ſus Chriſt himſelf, needed not, one would think, any farther ignation by the governors of the church to ſet about the rk: and yet, when he was ſent abroad to preach the goſpel th Barnabas, he was particularly ordained or conſecrated by e apoſtles. Before that, indeed, he had publicly declared, at wonderful things God had wrought by him in his conver- n, and had diſputed with the unbelieving Jews (as any other ivate chriſtian might do) convincing them, by his own expe- nce, that Jeſus was the Chriſt; yet ſtill he had no ſolemn iſſion: and therefore, when the Holy Ghoſt commanded the oſtles to [h] ſeparate Paul and Barnabas for the work, for which had called them, they faſted, and prayed, and laid their hands on them, and ſent them forth; in like manner as Paul mſelf ordained Timothy, when he made him biſhop of Ephe- s; and Titus, when he ſent him into Crete, [i] to ſet in order e things that were wanting, and ordain elders in every city.

AND as the practice of the apoſtles ſhews, that all men in mmon have not a right to the prieſtly office, ſo their doctrines fficiently evince, that there is a particular order of men ap- inted to this function: for, [k] are all apoſtles? Are all pro- hets? Are all teachers? ſays St Paul, plainly enough intimating, at they are not all ſo, but peculiar perſons are inveſted with eſe dignities: and again, ſpeaking of Chriſt's aſcenſion, he tells s, that he thereupon [l] gave ſome, apoſtles; and ſome, prophets; nd ſome, evangeliſts; and ſome, paſtors and teachers; for the erfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry, for the difying of the body of Chriſt; and this is to be, till we all ome in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son f God, unto a perfect man, *i. e.* until the church be conſum- nated: and purſuant to this diſtinction, we find him exhorting he people, [m] to know thoſe who labour among them, and are over

and pre- cepts,

er of the diſciples was multiplied, and there was a murmuring of the Grecians againſt the Hebrews, that the apoſtles ſaid, Look ye out ſeven men, whom we may appoint over this buſineſs, *ous kataſteſomen*. Now in many modern editions, and even in ſome of Field's beautiful Cambridge ones, in- ſtead of *we*, it is, whom *ye* may appoint over this buſineſs. This is a direct corruption of the text, and it is well known to what purpoſe it ſerved. We ee what the people's power was in appointing eccleſiaſtical officers: they pro- poſed, the apoſtles approved, and ordained; and that, as the text plainly hews, without calling in any other authority to make their acts valid, beſides heir own. Wotton's Sermon of the Rights of the Clergy.

g Wotton, ibid. h Acts xiii. 2, 3. i Titus i. 5. k 1 Cor. xii. 29. l Eph. . 11, &c. m 1 Theſſ. v. 12.

over them in the Lord; and to [n] obey those that have the rule over them, and to submit themselves; because they watch for their souls, as they that must give an account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief. From all which, it unquestionably follows, that ministers and people were originally distinct, and that there was a peculiar rank of men, all along in the church, whose appointed task it was, to minister about holy things.

and from reason itself.

"BUT, allowing it was so, in the infant-state of the church, "yet what occasion is there for this set of men, or their function, "now, when the book of life is in every man's hands, and all "the congregation is knowing and learned, as well as they?" It is much to be wished indeed, that the laity would so far attend to the word of God, and other good books, where the substance of their duty is comprized, as to attain a competent understanding thereof, and thereby facilitate the clergy's pains, and make the burden of their high calling less laborious. But even upon the supposition that most men do so, we cannot but imagine, that some advantage at least will accrue, even to those that know their duty best, from an order of men, who are bound to deal impartially with them, in awakening their attention, searching their consciences, representing their danger, quickening their endeavours, and frequently refreshing their memories in many things, which they are so far from carefully recollecting, that the temptations, and pleasures, and cares of the world, often prevail with them to use many arts, and to take great pains to forget, and even drive these things out of their thoughts.

[o] BUT waving these, and such like arguments, are we to suppose, that the whole of a pastor or teacher's office consists in this single point of instruction? No such thing. These are the persons authorised by God, to transact the affairs of the second covenant, between him and his people, and therefore called in scripture his Delegates, and [p] Ambassadors; to seal that covenant by visible signs and sacraments, and therefore said to baptize men for [q] the washing away of their sins; and to offer the commemorative sacrifice of their Lord's death, and therefore said to [r] bless the holy elements at his table. These are appointed to declare the conscience absolved or condemned, and, in the name, and by the power of their great Original, the high-priest of our profession, to grant pardon upon certain conditions, and therefore said [s] to rebuke with all authority, and [t] to retain and remit the sins of others. These are set between God and men, to bless in his name, and to intercede for their charge, with an express promise of being heard in their mediations. In a word, these are declared to be [u] ordained of men, in things pertaining unto God; and

n Heb. xiii. 17. o Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels. Vol. IV. p 2 Cor. v. 10. q Acts xxii. 16. r 1 Corin. x. 16. s Titus ii. 15. t John xx. 23. u Heb. v. 1.

n that reſpect, to have an honour conferred upon them,
n * no man taketh to himſelf, but he that was called of
as was Aaron. So far is this diſtinction between the
y and laity from being an empty title; ſo impoſſible to be
y time ſuperfluous; and, by conſequence, ſo juſtly to be
uded of perpetual duration, and even eſſential to the conſti-
n of the chriſtian church. x And well might it be ſo in
hriſtian, when, even in the Gentile world, the ſuggeſtions of
re, and the innate reverence of a deity taught them, that
perſons were peculiarly to be appointed for the myſteries
ceremonies of their religion, and that they might perform
with more exactneſs and ſolemnity, ſhould intirely devote
ſelves to this work.

HUS we have ſeen, from ſcripture and reaſon both, that the
ſters of God were, in all times, a diſtinct order of men, ſe-
ted from the people, and inveſted with a character and office
liar; and ſhall now proceed in our inquiry who theſe mi-
rs were; how they ſucceeded; and in what point of pre-
ence they ſtood, with relation to one another.

Their orders in the church from the firſt,

WHEN God at firſt eſtabliſhed a form of worſhip among
people, whom he had ſeparated from the reſt of mankind
his more immediate ſervice, y he appointed three orders of
, the high-prieſt, prieſts, and Levites, to attend his temple,
ſerve at his altar. When our Saviour inſtituted his reli-
, being no lover of innovations, he kept as near to this
in his own time, as the circumſtances of things would bear;
himſelf ſuſtained the place of high-prieſt, as he is z ſome-
s called in ſcripture, his apoſtles were, under him, as prieſts,
the diſciples below them, as Levites. When the apoſtles
eeded their maſter in the government of the church, being
fixed as yet in dioceſes, they became a college of biſhops,
out of the diſciples, elected evangeliſts, ſent about to preach
plant churches, who repreſented preſbyters; and to theſe
added the deacons, who were ordained, not only in Judea,
alſo among the Gentile proſelytes, a as appears from the
of ſome epiſtles, and the rules given to Timothy concern-
them. When great multitudes, in ſeveral nations, were
verted, and biſhops were placed in every great city, b it
ns very evident, that there were two orders under their
ection, the preaching preſbyters, and the miniſtring deacons,
cially in regular churches, and at leaſt before the expiration
he apoſtolic age. But becauſe all this may be looked upon
bare aſſertions only, we will here examine a little into the
ory of the apoſtles times, and thence trace down their ſuc-
ors for an age or two following.

Though the account hereof is not ſo diſtinct as afterwards.

AND here the candid and impartial reader will not expect,
hope, ſo full and diſtinct an account of the miniſters, who
aſſiſted

x Heb. v. 4. x Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. y Comber on Ordina-
z Heb. iv. 14. a Phil. i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 8. b Comber, ibid.

aſſiſted the apoſtles in governing the church, as may be give
thoſe, who lived in ſucceeding ages. 1. [c] Becauſe many o
miniſters who lived in the age of the apoſtles, were extra
nary perſons, whoſe miniſtrations are not always ſo eaſy to
diſtinguiſhed from the ordinary offices of the church, or fr
one another. The apoſtle indeed tells us, that [d] God hath
ſome in his church, firſt apoſtles, ſecondly prophets, thir
teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps,
vernments, diverſities of tongues: in which place it is cert
that different orders of miniſters are deſcribed, ſome of wh
did not only excel others in the extraordinary gifts of the Spi
but had authority alſo to govern them; becauſe the firſt or
is that of the apoſtles, to whom all other chriſtians, of wh
rank ſoever, were ſubject: but then, it is not eaſy to give
diſtinct and certain account, what were the particular offices
theſe perſons; which of them were extraordinary and tempora
and which deſigned for the conſtant and laſting uſe of the chur
ſince the ſcriptures do not explain them, and [e] learned m
have differed in nothing more, than in their judgments abo
the

c Archbiſhop Potter on Church-government. d 1 Cor. xii. 28.

e The moſt general and received explication of theſe offices is this—T
prophets are ſuppoſed to be the expounders of the difficult and abſtruſe pa
of ſcripture, by an immediate inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt; for ſo the apoſ
in the following Chapter, ſeems to put it; though I have propheſied, and kn
all myſteries, and all knowledge, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. The teachers ſeem to be me
who, having received the doctrine of faith from the apoſtles, preached it
others for their converſion, and ſo they are the ſame with thoſe who labour
in the word and doctrine, 1 Tim. v. 17. The Helps, *i. e.* putting the abſtra
for the concrete, Helpers, ſeem to be the deacons, whoſe office it was to loo
to the goods of the church, to the relief and maintenance of the poor, and t
aſſiſt the ſuperior orders in adminiſtring the ſacraments of Baptiſm and th
Lord's Supper: for, as the Talmudiſts, ſays Dr Lightfoot, call the Levite
the Helps of the Prieſts, ſo may the apoſtle call the deacons, which anſwer
to them, the helps of the apoſtles and biſhops of the church. Governments
i. e. (according to the former way of ſpeaking) governors are interpreted b
ſome to be the ruling preſbyters, whoſe work it was to obſerve the manners of th
people, and to promote good diſcipline and government in the church; others
with more reaſon, ſuppoſe them to denote the rulers of the churches planted
by the apoſtles, and who are ſometimes ſtiled biſhops, Acts xx. 28. Sometimes
hemoumenoi, guides or rulers, Heb. xiii. 7, 17. And ſometimes *proeſtotes*
preſidents, or prelates, Rom. xii. 8. 1 Theſſ. v. 12. But Dr Lightfoot con
jectures that they were the men who had the gift of diſcerning ſpirits, be
cauſe the *Kybernefeis*, which we here render governments, ſignifies in the Old
Teſtament, wiſe counſels and ſkill in giving judgment of things, [Prov. i. 5
xi. 14. xiv. 16.] and it is not reaſonable, as he ſays, to ſuppoſe that no offic
ſhould be appointed to this ſo neceſſary a gift, and yet no other is here men
tioned to which it can belong. Whitby on 1 Cor. xii. 28. As for the gifts o
healing, of miracles, and of tongues, they have not the leaſt appearance o
diſtinguiſhing the perſons who were poſſeſſed of them as officers of the church
becauſe they were promiſcuouſly conferred on all, as appears in the caſe o
the converſion of Cornelius and his friends, as well as the converts whic
were at Epheſus; and therefore the ſagacious Mr Rogers concludes, that th
characters here deſcribed, were not, in a proper ſenſe, officers of the church
of Corinth, but only perſons, by whoſe ſupernatural and infuſed gifts, the
Holy Ghoſt ſupplied the want of proper officers, and were, therefore, never
deſigned for any long continuance in that church. Sermons on ſeveral occa
ſions.

2. It is to be obſerved, that the hiſtorical parts of the Teſtament are very ſhort, and many times relate nothing er, than the firſt plantation of the goſpel: and that moſt of piſtles, being ſent to churches juſt in their infancy, where ing miniſters, as yet, were not ſettled, and written to per- lately converted from Judaiſm or heatheniſm, their main de- was to inſtruct them in the principles of chriſtianity, or to them againſt falſe teachers. But there was not that occa- to ſpeak any thing concerning the form of church-govern- , which the apoſtles either kept in their own hands, or mitted to perſons choſen by themſelves. All that ſeems iſite was, in general terms, to put them in mind to be obe- t to thoſe, who laboured among them in the miniſtry, and great pains for the inſtruction and ſalvation of their ſouls.

THOUGH therefore it cannot be expected that the account ch the ſcripture gives us of the offices and orders of the ſtian miniſtry, in this ſituation of circumſtances, ſhould be and diſtinct; yet, if we look into the church of Jeruſalem, re chriſtianity firſt began to form itſelf, beſides the twelve ſtles who lived there and governed the church together for e time, we find ſeven deacons, who were ſolemnly ordained the apoſtles, to be [f] miniſters of the word, as well as mini- s of tables; and therefore it was required as a previous lification that they ſhould be full of the Holy Ghoſt and dom. When the apoſtles were about to leave Jeruſalem, to take each one the way which the Holy Ghoſt ſhould di- t for the ſpeedier propagation of the goſpel, St James was biſhop of Jeruſalem, and had at the ſame time a college of ſbyters ordained under him: [g] nor want there ſeveral other ages, both in the Acts and the Epiſtles of the apoſtles, which ke it appear, that in all places which had been long enough verted to be formed into regular churches, there were or- s of ſtanding and fixed miniſters. St Peter, who writes to ſtrangers ſcattered through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, a, and Bithynia, exhorts [h] the elders to feed the flock of God, the people to be obedient to their elders. St Paul, having led the elders of Epheſus to Miletus, gives them a ſolemn rge [i] to take care of the flock over which the Holy Ghoſt has

The firſt miniſters of the church called elders.

[f] Acts vi. 2. &c. [g] This indeed is not expreſsly mentioned in the hiſtory, there is good reaſon to preſume it was ſo; becauſe after a certain period time, we find ſuch frequent mention made of the elders, viz. that (Acts xv. &c. the diſciples came from Antioch to Jeruſalem to conſult with the apoſtles elders, whether the converts from heatheniſm were to be circumciſed; t theſe diſciples were received by the apoſtles and elders; that a decree s accordingly enacted (Acts xvi. 4.) by the apoſtles and elders at Jeruſalem; that when St Paul returned from preaching the goſpel, and was deſirous give an account of his ſucceſs among the Gentiles (Acts xxi. 18.) the day lowing he went in unto James, all the elders being preſent; James as the ef or biſhop, and the elders, as next under him, paſtors and teachers of the urch of Jeruſalem. Archbiſhop Potter of Church Government. [h] 1 Pet. v. 2. [i] Acts xx. 28.

has made them [*episkopous*] overseers, and tells Titus that he had left him in Crete to [k] ordain elders in every city. St James who writes to the twelve tribes wherever scattered abroad, directs [l] the sick among them to send for the elders of the church to pray over them, and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord, and (to instance in no more) St John, in the three first chapters of his revelation, introduces our Lord as sending seven epistles to the seven churches of the proconsular Asia, directed to the seven angels of these churches, whom he calls the [m] seven stars in his right hand, and by whom almost all interpreters understand so many single persons invested with supreme authority in these seven churches. So that in all the cities of Crete, in the principal towns of Asia, and in all the places where the twelve tribes were dispersed, and that was all over the Roman empire, there were elders or persons entrusted with the government of God's church, appointed even before the canon of the New Testament was compleated. But who these elders were; whether they were the same as what we now properly call bishops, or of an order next above deacons, and what in time came to be distinguished by the name of presbyters, is a question that has exercised the pens of many learned men, which, though we pretend not to determine, yet it may possibly give some light to the argument, if we consider,

Who these elders were.

8. THAT though the words bishops and presbyter be sometimes used promiscuously, yet it will not therefore follow that they are both of the same order. [p] In the Jewish œconomy there was an high-priest, under him inferior priests, and under them Levites; and yet in several authors all these three orders are comprehended under the two names of priests and Levites, though it cannot be denied that the high-priest had powers and prerogatives peculiar to himself. The apostles, in like manner call [q] themselves presbyters, but it must not thence be concluded that every presbyter was an apostle, because it is apparent that there were several powers exercised by the apostles which never of right belonged to a mere presbyter; and therefore when the name of presbyter is applied to any of a superior order, it might be either in consideration of their seniority (the apostles and others admitted to the episcopate, being generally persons of advanced years) or on account of their authority as church governors, according to the general import and signification of the word presbyter; or because these governors, having each of them really all the power of a presbyter, might the rather call themselves so, because it was a title of more condescension and humility than that of apostles, which in a short time grew into high repute. It may be considered,

2. THAT

k Tit. i. 5. l James v. 14. m Rev. i. 20. p Archbishop Potter of Church Government. q 1 Pet. v. 1. John Ep. ii. 1.

2. THAT though in ſome churches we read only of biſhops d deacons, which may induce men to imagine that biſhops and eſbyters were all of the ſame order; [r] yet it is a thing conant enough to reaſon, that in thoſe churches where any of e apoſtles lived, or commonly reſided, the government reained in their hands; and ſo long there was no occaſion for y more than two orders, viz. preſbyters and deacons, unr the direction of an apoſtle: and, in like manner, in thoſe ies where few were converted, there was no occaſion at firſt r any more than a biſhop and his deacons, until the number proſelytes was increaſed. To this purpoſe we find Epihanius [s] accounting why St Paul in ſome places mentions only iſhops and deacons without preſbyters; and in others preſbyrs and deacons without biſhops, viz. "That the apoſtles could not perfectly ſettle all things at once, and therefore in their converſions, where no perſon was fitly qualified to be a biſhop, they only ordained preſbyters and deacons, and ſuch places for the preſent remained without a biſhop; and in other places, where one was found fit to be a biſhop, but by reaſon of the paucity of believers, there were no others qualified to be preſbyters, they ordained only a biſhop and deacons." Which, by the way, ſolves the difficulty why St aul delivers rules [t] for the ordination of biſhops and deacons, ithout mentioning the intermediate order of preſbyters; ſince, ccording to this ſituation of affairs, he might conveniently nough include theſe laſt in the rules which concern biſhops; becauſe preſbyters are ordained to a ſort of copartnerſhip in he paſtoral and epiſcopal charge, and (excepting the impoſition f hands in ordination and confirmation) there is ſcarce any act hich preſbyters may not exerciſe as well as biſhops. But,

3. THOUGH we ſhould allow that the name of biſhop and reſbyter did, in the age of the apoſtles, ſignify the ſame office; nd that all the biſhops ſpoken of in the New Teſtament, were ere preſbyters, and of the next order above deacons; yet ſtill t appears that even then there were three diſtinct orders of miiſters in the church; namely that of deacons, another of preſyters, and over them a ſuperior order, in which were not only he apoſtles, but alſo Timothy and Titus, who governed the hurches in which they reſided. For it is plain from St Paul's piſtles to each (but * more eſpecially from that to Timothy) hat they had power, not only over the laity to [x] command and each them; [y] to receive widows into the church's ſervice, or o reject or refuſe them; and [z] to oblige women to go modeſtly

r Comber on the ordination office. s Hæreſ. DXXV. Sect. V. This account he affirms to be taken from the moſt antient hiſtories, [*bathytatais hiſtoriais*] and it is hence manifeſt, that in his time, it was believed that the ſuperiority of biſhops over preſbyters was eſtabliſhed by the apoſtles. t 1 Tim. iii. u Archbiſhop Potter of Church Government. * Scott's Mediator. x 1 Tim. v. 11. y Ibid. v. 4, 9, 16. z Ibid.

in their apparel, and to keep ſilence in the church; but alſo over the clergy; to take care [a] that ſuitable proviſion ſhould be made for them, [b] that none ſhould be admitted a deacon till after competent trial, nor ordained an elder till after he had well acquitted himſelf in the deaconſhip; to exerciſe eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction over them; [c] to receive accuſations againſt them, and, if he found them guilty, to put them to open ſhame; to charge paſtors [d] not to preach any ſtrange doctrine, if they did, [e] to rebuke with all authority; [f] to admoniſh heretics, and in caſe of pertinency, to eject them from the communion of the church.

Biſhops the ſupreme governors of the church, from antiquity,

THUS it ſeems manifeſt that in the times of the apoſtles there were three diſtinct orders of miniſters, by whom the chriſtian church was governed; and if we proceed in our inquiry an age or two farther, we ſhall find who the ſupreme governor in each church was cleared up beyond all controverſy. Clemens Romanus, who wrote an epiſtle to the Corinthians before St John's death, reminds them that before the late unhappy ſchiſm, they walked in God's laws, being ſubject to [g] their governors, *i. e.* their biſhops or ſpiritual rulers, and giving due honour to the preſbyters among them. Ignatius, who ſuffered martyrdom about four years after St John's death, writing to the Magneſians, exhorts them all to reverence their biſhop; [h] their biſhop preſiding in the place of God; the preſbyters as the council of apoſtles; and the deacons as the miniſters of Chriſt. Clemens of Alexandria, who lived in the ſame century, having ſelected ſome texts of ſcripture, containing a ſummary of the duties which concern all chriſtians in general, adds, [i] that there are other precepts without number, which concern men in particular capacities; ſome which relate to preſbyters, others to biſhops, and others to deacons. Tertullian, who was contemporary with them, in his treatiſe of baptiſm, affirms, that [k] the power of baptizing is lodged in the biſhop, and that it may alſo be exerciſed by preſbyters and deacons, but not without the biſhop's commiſſion; [l] and in another of his pieces, he tells us that biſhops were ſet over the church by the apoſtles, and had had their ſucceſſion continued to his time. Origen, who was ſcholar to Clemens of Alexandria, and flouriſhed in the beginning of the next century, ſpeaking of our debts in the Lord's prayer, inſiſts firſt on the debts or duties common to all chriſtians, and then adds, [m] beſides theſe general debts, there is a debt

a 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. b Ibid. iii. 10, 13. c Ibid. v. 19, 20. d Ibid. i. 3. e Tit. ii. 15. f Ibid. iii. 10. g Since we cannot reaſonably ſuppoſe that the chriſtians at Corinth had then any ſecular governors of their own, theſe *hegoumenoi* (who are ſet before, and diſtinguiſhed from the preſbyters) muſt be their biſhops, who in ſcripture are called by that very name, [Acts xv. 22. and Heb. xiii. 7.] and it may be farther remarked, that obedience is made due to them, and only reverence to the preſbyters. Comber on the ordination office. h Ad Magneſ. c. vi. i Pædag. Lib. III. c. xii. k De Baptiſmo, c. xvii. l De preſcrip. Heretic. c. xxx. m Origen. Lib. *peri euches.*

debt peculiar to widows, another to deacons, another to preſbyters, and another to biſhops; which is the greateſt of all, enacted by our Saviour of the whole church, and who will ſeverely puniſh the non-payment of it. Cyprian, who was Tertullian's ſcholar, lived a little before the middle of the ſame age; and he, blaming ſome preſbyters, who without his conſent would have reſtored to the church's communion ſome who had lapſed in the time of perſecution; [n] What a dreadful proſpect, ſays he, muſt we have of the divine vengeance, when ſome of the preſbyters, neither mindful of the goſpel, nor of their own ſalvation, neither regarding the future judgments of God, nor the biſhop who now preſides over them, dare arrogate intirely to themſelves what was never attempted under any of my predeceſſors? Which is a ſufficient evidence of the ſubordination of preſbyters to their biſhops, both in Cyprian's own age, and under his predeceſſors.

BUT the farther we go, the clearer the evidence both of the ſucceſſion and pre-eminence of biſhops appears, and therefore to cloſe up all farther inquiry with this obſervation,—That before the middle of the ſecond century, viz. within forty years after the laſt of the apoſtles, ſingle perſons did every where preſide over preſbyters; that theſe did each of them exerciſe authority over their reſpective churches; and that their powers were as great as thoſe which we claim to belong to biſhops now, is ſo irrefragably proved from the beſt and moſt antient monuments of the church, that the greateſt oppoſers of epiſcopal authority have been forced to confeſs it: which, to all unprejudiced perſons, muſt needs be a ſufficient proof of ſuch an inſtitution.

FOR that the firſt ſucceſſors of the apoſtles were wiſe and good men, no one who has any regard to the cauſe of chriſtianity will deny. They knew what the apoſtles had ordained concerning the government of the church, and no ſufficient reaſon can be aſſigned why they ſhould innovate upon an apoſtolic inſtitution. [o] They were men of ſuch integrity, ſuch piety, ſuch love to Chriſt, that they never ſcrupled to ſeal the goſpel which they preached with their blood; they brought forth the fruits of it in their holy lives, and ratified its truth by their deaths. Now, how was this conſiſtent with the known humility of theſe perſons to arrogate to themſelves more power over their brethren than their Lord and Maſter had truſted them with? What could ſhew more impiety towards Chriſt, than boldly and ſacrilegiouſly to violate his inſtitution? And what could be more injurious to their brethren than to rob them of their privileges, and to aſſume to themſelves alone an authority which was common to others beſides? How much ambition, how much pride, how much tyranny muſt poſſeſs the minds of thoſe who would thus go about to lord it over God's heritage? and the reaſon of the thing.

Theſe

n Cypriani Epiſt. o Biſhop Smalridge's Sermons.

Theſe are the crimes which contenders for a parity among eccleſiaſtical governors muſt, in conſequence, impute to the immediate diſciples and ſucceſſors of the apoſtles, when they repreſent them as uſurping an undue authority and dominion over thoſe who, by Chriſt's appointment, were their equals; but if theſe men were holy, if they were religious, if they were worthy of the name of chriſtians (as none I think can have the courage to gainſay) they were not, they could not be guilty of ſuch intolerable pride and arrogance.

AND as they would not, if they could, ſo neither is it probable that they could, if they would, have introduced into the univerſal church another form of government than ſuch as was inſtituted by the apoſtles. If indeed only one or two churches have been governed by biſhops, there would be room to ſuſpect that this might be an undue deviation from the apoſtolical pattern. But when all the churches founded by the apoſtles though never ſo remote, and not ſo much as known by name to one another, did all agree in the ſame form of government, ſo that there is not one church we read of, but what we are able to prove, was governed by a ſingle biſhop; this we think could never ſo ſoon, ſo univerſally have been brought about, unleſs the churches had, together with the ſame faith, received alſo the ſame form of government from the apoſtles. If the ſeveral biſhops in their ſeveral churches did challenge and exerciſe an authority over their preſbyters, which was contrary to the command of Chriſt, and the inſtitution of the apoſtles, how came it to paſs that no preſbyters did ever oppoſe them, and object to them this violation of their Lord's command, and invaſion of their rights? If the apoſtles did delegate an equal ſhare of authority to every preſbyter of each church, how came the preſbyters quietly to ſuffer this authority to be forced away from them, and transferred upon the biſhops? Why did not the preſbyters of that age, as well as ſome of ours, pretend that they were equal to the greateſt of the biſhops? Were not they who had lived in the next age, as well acquainted with the practice of the apoſtles, as we are at the diſtance of ſo many centuries? And if they were, how came it to paſs that no preſbyter of them all had, in thoſe days, courage enough to tell an aſſuming biſhop, "That he arrogated too much to himſelf; that he could "not but know, what every one knew, that the Lord and his "apoſtles, from whom they received their faith, their doctrine, "and their authority, had decreed that there ſhould be an "exact equality between them, and no one pretend to a ſupe-"riority over another?" And yet it is certain matter of fact that ſuch an authority was exerciſed without any oppoſition; that ſuch a power was challenged by biſhops, and never reſiſted by preſbyters; and that from the age next after the apoſtles,

to

age next before ours, there was never above one ter taken notice of in hiſtory (and him we find branded as etic on this account) as pretending to be equal to a biſhop. UT might not this be done, may the preſent advocates equality ſay, without any methods of uſurpation, by a conſent and voluntary dedition? The apoſtles indeed at exerciſed a ſuperiority over other eccleſiaſtical orders, leaving none behind to ſucceed in that power, the church every where governed by a common council of preſby- s, till this form of government being found inconvenient, giving too much occaſion for ſchiſms and diviſions, it was laſt univerſally agreed, that one preſbyter ſhould be choſen to preſide over the reſt:" and from this they produce the rity of St Jerom [q], who having obſerved that the name of s and preſbyters are uſed promiſcuouſly in the ſcriptures, hat the apoſtles likewiſe in ſome places call themſelves yters; from thence he concludes, that there was no diſ- on between their offices, but that apoſtle, biſhop, and yter were only different names for the ſame thing; that hes at firſt were generally governed by a college of preſ- s, equal in rank and dignity to one another; but after- s diviſions ariſing by reaſon of this parity among preſbyters, every preſbyter began to claim, as his own particular ſub- thoſe whom he had baptized; it was decreed all the d over, that one of the preſbyters in every church ſhould t over the reſt, and particularly called biſhop, and that the care of the church ſhould be committed to him, in order the ſeeds of ſchiſm and contention might be deſtroyed.

An objection.

HIS ſuppoſition at firſt ſight reflects not a little upon the om of Chriſt and his apoſtles. For if the apoſtles, devolv- the government of the church upon common councils of yters, left it in ſuch a condition as occaſioned ſchiſms and ions, and, for the removal of theſe, the church afterwards d it neceſſary to diſſolve theſe preſbyteries, and introduce opacy in its room; then were Chriſt and his apoſtles both udent in not foreſeeing, and neglective in not preventing e diſorders; and, conſequently, had not the after-age taken care

Anſwered.

[q] This was Aerius; but upon what account he is called an heretic is not ſo agreed: Blundel however has well obſerved, that the main reaſon why he condemned, was his unneceſſary ſeparation from the church, and not his on about biſhops; for had it been the latter, there can be no reaſon ed why his hereſy, if it was then thought ſo, ſhould not be mentioned r by Socrates, Theodoret, Sozomen, or Evagrius, before whoſe time he , when yet they mention the Euſtathiani, who were contemporaries with and therefore when Epiphanius and others liſt him in the roll of heretics, uſt be either on account of the other heretical notions which he maintained, ecauſe they took the name Heretic (as it is evident they often did) for who, upon a matter of different opinion from the preſent ſenſe of the ch, did proceed to make ſeparation from the body of the catholic church; h I take to be the trueſt account of the matter. Stillingfleet's Irenicum. ad Evagrium.

care to ſupply the defect of their conduct, by ſettling a w
form of government than they left, the church had infallibly
to ruin. This is the unavoidable conſequence of St Jerom's
potheſis, and, at the ſame time, a remarkable inſtance to w
abſurdities a wiſe man's paſſion and reſentment will lead

The occaſion of St Jerom's words.

For the true occaſion of this famous paſſage was,—That
deacons, who enjoyed wealthier places in the church than
preſbyters, claimed ſeveral privileges above them, and w
thereupon unwilling to be admitted into the order. This i
gularity ſo provoked that holy father, who himſelf was on
preſbyter, that, to raiſe his own order beyond the competi
of deacons, he endeavoured to make it equal, by its original
ſtitution, with biſhops and apoſtles; and in this he fell in
common miſtake of running into one extreme to avoid anot
but even if this had not been the caſe, yet there is very g
reaſon to except againſt his teſtimony, becauſe it was a
while ſubſequent to the witneſſes we have above produced.

St JEROM [r] was not born till about three hundred and th
years after Chriſt, almoſt an hundred years after Origen on
the lateſt, and full three hundred years after Clemens, the e
lieſt of the authors we have cited; and therefore, to adhere
the authority of one ſingle witneſs of ſo late a date, againſt
unanimous aſſertions of ſo many that lived ſo near a matter
fact, cannot but be thought irrational, eſpecially when we
this ſame great advocate for parity in other parts of his writ
where he was not heated with paſſion, expreſsly declaring,
"what Aaron and his ſons were, that we know the biſhops
preſbyters to be, and thereby acknowledging, that as Aaron,
divine right, was ſuperior to his ſons the prieſts, ſo is the bi
to the preſbyters. As plain a contradiction to this above-c
paſſage as one propoſition can be to another! And there

That preſbytery could not be changed into epiſcopacy.

we muſt ſuppoſe that the notion of an univerſal decree, wh
by one preſbyter in every church was raiſed to an epiſcopal
periority, was a mere conjecture of this father's, in order
ſolve the difficulty which he conceived in the promiſcuous uſe
the words *apoſtle*, *biſhop*, and *preſbyter*; [t] ſince it is impoſſ
to conceive how ſo great a change ſhould be introduced in
parts of the world, at a time when the church abounded w
men of great parts and learning, and yet not the leaſt men
be made of it in any other writings; at a time when no gen
council could meet to appoint it; when there were no chri
princes, on a political view, to ſet it forward; and when
reaſon of the heat of perſecution, and the diſtance of church
there was ſo little commerce and intercourſe between them,
from the churches of Armenia and Perſia in the Eaſt, to th
of Spain in the Weſt, from the African churches in the So

r Ep. ad Nepot. s Scott's Mediator. t Archbiſhop Potter, of Church
vernment. u See Whitby's Preface to the Epiſtle to Titus.

Britiſh churches in the North, this conſtitution ſhould ſally be received and ſubmitted to, if it had not been eſta- by the apoſtles, or the firſt founders of theſe churches. VERNMENT, we know, is a public matter of fact, and as viſible, and well known to every one. The people were ncerned to be well acquainted with the rulers whom God t over them, and to whom the ſcriptures had obliged them y obedience; and therefore would not eaſily ſubmit to novation which manifeſtly endangered the ſafety of their But even ſuppoſing that both they and the preſbyters have been prevailed upon to come into it; yet what temp- or motive could the perſons, then exalted, have to accept e advancement? Men do not eaſily deſire a change, but proſpect of ſome eaſe or temporal advantage, much leſs they perceive the change is like to add to their trouble, ncreaſe their danger. Now this was really the caſe of the hriſtian biſhops: they were ſtill expoſed to the ſharpeſt of their perſecutors, and when any ſtorm was raiſed againſt hurch, it commonly fell upon them firſt. Their labours were very great; and as the care of the whole flock lay them, they were extremely ſedulous and unwearied in the arge of it: and can we then reaſonably think that they be ſo fond of ſo much toil and peril, as to violate the inſti- n of the bleſſed Jeſus or his apoſtles, to obtain it? This is gnant to the nature of man, and abhorrent to their prin- s (as we ſhewed before) and therefore upon the whole we conclude, that whatever the ſenſe of the paſſage, upon h the objection is founded, may be, the ſuperiority of ps to preſbyters was of antient right, derived from the les, and no ſubſequent conceſſion, or innovation.

HIS difference, however, we owe to the authority of St m, among many other fathers, as to ſuppoſe the diſtinction ween biſhop and preſbyter, not only as to the honours and uments, wherewith the bounty of princes has enriched the er, but even to the exerciſe of their office and ſpiritual diction, was not near ſo conſpicuous in former ages as it is . A biſhop then thought it no diſparagement * to be join- with the loweſt prieſt in the ſacerdotal honour. The com- appellation, [x] wherewith they addreſſed each other was ther, or Fellow-preſbyter; nor was it any diſparagement is wiſdom and knowledge, in every matter of importance, dviſe with the [y] aſſembly of preſbyters, which was held the te of the church. Nay, ſeveral things there were in a ner peculiar to the biſhop's office and function which yet he could

The ſmall diſtinctions between biſhop and preſbyter.

Preſbyteros cum epiſcopo ſacerdotali honore conjunctos. Cypr. ad Luc. 58. x Fratri & compreſbytero ſexto. Aug. Ep. 104. Nay, the college reſbyters, writing to St Cyprian their biſhop, call him Brother. Cypr. 26. y *Symbouloi kai ſynedreuetai Epiſkopou*, Ignat. Ep. ad Tral. Habemus cleſia Senatum noſtrum, cœtum preſbyterorum. Hier. in Jeſai. c. iii.

could not do without the consent and approbation of his p byters. He could not [z] ordain any clerks, unless the pres were consenting to it; for they were the persons who we offer and propose such as they judged fit to enter into hol ders: he could not hear any cause of consequence [a] wit their presence, nor determine it without their approbation, in case he did, the sentence he gave was to be deemed n nor could [b] he degrade any presbyter without the consent synod, wherein a majority of presbyters were usually pres or [c] suspend him without the approbation of his chapter.

Dr Comber's opinion hereupon.

"I AM very sensible (says the [d] learned author I have "quently quoted upon this subject) that many of the privil "belonging to the second order of the clergy, have been "aside, whether to repress the ambition of the presbyters, "unjustly aimed at an equality, or out of an affectation of s "larity in some of the superior degrees, I will not determ "It is however equally pernicious to the church, for presby "to aspire at a parity with bishops, or for bishops to despise "others, as unworthy to advise or assist them: for the for "destroys, and the latter very much impairs the good gove "ment of the church. Bishops cannot exercise that author "which Christ and his apostles left them, if presbyters w "their equals; for this, as St Jerom speaks, will make as m "schisms as priests; nor can they have that useful assistan "towards the execution of their episcopal function, which "designed them, when they exclude so many learned and a "men, as this next order affords, from their counsels and "ministrations. The orders therefore must be distinct, "avoid confusion; but, provided the subordination be kept "due respect should at all times be shewn, to exclude arbitr "dominion. The bishop, in short, as an antient canon "provided, should sit higher in the assembly of presbyters "the Church, but within the house he should consider them "colleagues: in public, he should have all imaginable expr "sions of reverence from his clergy; but in private, sho "treat them with great civility and condescension, to allay "splendor of an exalted fortune, and to lessen the distan "which his honours and temporalities have set between them

THUS we have endeavoured to shew, that [e] as, in the Jew church, the high-priest was above the priests and Levites; in the infancy of the christian church, Christ was above t apostles, and the seventy disciples; as, while the apostles liv they were above the other ecclesiastical officers; so, even af th

z Ut episcopus, sine concilio clericorum suorum clericos non ordinet. Conc Carth, Can. 22. a Ut episcopus nullius causam audiat, absque presentia cl corum suorum, alioque irrita erit sententia. Ibid. Can. 23. b Concil B pal. 2. Can. 6. Anno 619. c Vel inhoneste tractare, aut sine judicio capi suspendere. Alex. III. in Decret, Lib. V. d Comber on Ordination. e Bi Smalridge's Sermons.

death, biſhops have (by divine appointment, not any vo-
ry dedition) and, to the end of the world, ought to have
wer and authority over prieſts and deacons. But becauſe Biſhops all
it may be inquired, whether there is not the like authority equal.
ne biſhop over another, it is to be obſerved, that whatever
be [f] diſputed concerning a priority of order, it is undoubt-
true, that, in point of power and authority, every apoſtle
equal. They were all diſtinguiſhed by the ſame common
e; had all the ſame commiſſion and inſtructions given them;
e all alike admitted to be attendants on Chriſt; were autho-
alike to preach his goſpel; and, without a difference, have
ve thrones appointed them, in which they are to judge the
ve tribes of Iſrael. And as their predeceſſors, the apoſtles,
e in all reſpects of equal power and authority; ſo there are
pregnant proofs in antiquity, that every biſhop, in the firſt
uries, was ſupreme in his own dioceſe, and ſubject to none but
iſt. One biſhop indeed might excel another in the extent of his
eſe, in the number and quality of chriſtians under his care,
in outward ſplendor and magnificence; but to apply [g] St
om's words in this caſe; "Wherever a biſhop is, whether
t Rome, or at Eugubium, at Conſtantinople, or at Rhegium,
t Alexandria, or at Tani, he has the ſame merit, and the
ame prieſthood. Neither the power of riches, nor abaſe-
ment of poverty makes a biſhop higher or lower, but they
re all ſucceſſors of the apoſtles."

BUT though the biſhops of the primitive church were all The riſe of
eſted with the ſame office and authority: yet, in proceſs of metropoli-
e, and as chriſtianity increaſed, it was found neceſſary to en- tans and
e the epiſcopal power: and therefore, as before there was primates,
monly a biſhop placed in every great city, [h] ſo now, in eve-
metropolis, as the Romans called it, or mother-city of every
vince, wherein were courts of civil judicature, there was an
biſhop or metropolitan, who had eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction
r all the churches within that province. He was ſuperior and their
ll the biſhops within thoſe limits; and here it belonged to juriſdiction
, either to ordain, or to ratify the elections and ordinations
all other biſhops, which, without his confirmation, were
ked upon as null and void. Once at leaſt every year he was
ſummon the biſhops under him to a ſynod; to inquire into,
direct the eccleſiaſtical affairs within his province; to inſpect
lives and manners, the opinions and principles of his biſhops;
to admoniſh, reprove, and ſuſpend them that were diſor-
ly and irregular: if any controverſies or contentions hap-
ed between any of them, he was to have the hearing and
ermination of them; nor indeed was any matter of moment

[f] See Archbiſhop Potter on Church-government, c. iii. [g] Ad Evagrium.
ave's Primitive Chriſtianity.

done within the compass of his jurisdiction, without consulting him in the case.

When christianity, increasing still more and more, came at last to overspread the whole Roman empire, there sprang up another branch of the episcopal office, as much superior to that of metropolitans as theirs was to common bishops, viz. that of primates and patriarchs, who had jurisdiction over several provinces: but for the right understanding of this, it is requisite to know:—[i] That, when the christian faith was fully settled in the world, it was determined to model the external government of the church, as near as might be, to the civil government of the empire. Now the whole empire being divided into thirteen dioceses, as they called these divisions, and these containing about an hundred and twenty provinces, and every province several cities; as in every city there was a civil magistrate, for the execution and preservation of the peace, both in the city and adjacent country; so was there also a bishop, for spiritual order and government, whose jurisdiction was of the like extent and latitude: as, in every province there was a proconsul, or president, whose seat was usually at the metropolis, whither all inferior cities came for judgment in matters of importance; so in the same city, there was an archbishop or metropolitan, for matters of ecclesiastical concernment: and lastly, as in every diocese, the emperors had their vicarii or lieutenants, who dwelt in the principal city of the diocese, where all imperial edicts were published, and causes not determined elsewhere, decided; so there was in the same city a primate, to whom the last determination of all appeals from all the provinces in difference of the clergy, and the sovereign care of all the diocese for sundry points of spiritual concernment, did belong: so that the patriarch, as superior to the metropolitans, was to have under his jurisdiction, not only one single province, but a whole diocese (in the old Roman notion of the word) consisting of many provinces. To him belonged the consecration of the metropolitans that were under him; the summoning them to councils; the correcting their misdemeanors; and in matters which lay properly within his cognizance, from his judgment and sentence, there was no appeal. But to return to the ordinary ministers of the church.

The qualifications of ministers.

The qualifications which the scriptures require in him that is admitted to attend on God's altar, are such as these—That he [k] be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre, but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate, [l] and having a good report, even of them that are without, *i. e.* of unbelieving Jews and Gentiles, lest he fall into their reproach, and in the snare of the devil. For, be he never

Virtue.

i Cave's Primitive Christianity, k Tit. i. 7, &c. l 1 Tim. iii. 7.

ever ſo learned and ingenious, yet, if he be not virtuous, his example will do more harm than all the other labours do good: he will diſcourage the pious, and harden ſinners; diſhonour the Lord Jeſus, diſgrace the church whereunto he belongs, and not only deſtroy his own, but the ſouls of other people likewiſe.

Learning.

BUT though virtue be the principal, yet it is not the only qualification belonging to a miniſter of Chriſt; for if, under the levitical diſpenſation, which conſiſted in a great meaſure of carnal obſervances, [n] the prieſts lips were to preſerve knowledge, becauſe the people were to require the law at their mouths; how much more under the chriſtian, where the adminiſtrations of the prieſthood are become ſpiritual, and the burden of their office vaſtly augmented. [o] The apoſtles indeed were *anthroopoi agrammatoi kai idiootai*, that is to ſay, according to the ſtrict ſignification of the words, Men unlearned, and of a mean and pleian condition; nevertheleſs, ſince they were appointed by God to preach the goſpel to ſeveral nations, a work requiring a conſiderable knowledge of the languages of thoſe nations, impoſſible to be performed without it, and yet impoſſible for the apoſtles, in a natural and ordinary courſe of ſtudy to acquire; God was pleaſed to ſupply this defect, and to give them all neceſſary qualifications by immediate and divine infuſion. From whence we may infer, that if helps and qualifications were not always of moſt ſinglar uſe, and ſometimes of indiſpenſible neceſſity to the ſacred calling, certainly the moſt wiſe God would never have been at the expence of a miracle to endow men of that calling with them.

Even neceſſary to the apoſtles

NAY, we may add further, [p] that even the apoſtles, thoſe miniſters of God, who were inſpired from heaven, did not ſo wholly depend upon divine inſpiration, but that they made uſe alſo of ordinary helps and means (ſuch as reading books, with ſtudy and meditation on them) for their aſſiſtance, in the diſcharge of their office. St Paul had his books, his manuſcripts, and collation of notes too, which he read, and which he found ſo uſeful, that he gives Timothy a ſpecial charge to convey them ſafely to him; [q] the cloak, that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comeſt, bring with thee, and the books, but eſpecially the parchments: and it is farther to be obſerved, that he earneſtly exhorts the ſame Timothy, to the like courſe of reading and ſtudy; [r] give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine; (which he calls elſewhere [s] Kindling, or ſtirring up gifts that were in him) meditate on theſe things, and give thyſelf wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all. And if ſtudy and meditation, the knowledge of ſciences, and human learning were requiſite in inſpired apoſtles, for the more complete

m Comber on Ordination. n Mal. ii. 7. o South's Sermons, Vol. IV. Bull's Sermons, Vol. II. q 2 Tim. iv. 13. r 1 Tim. iv. 13. s 2 Tim. i. 6.

complete diſcharge of their office; how much more neceſſary is it now, when thoſe miraculous gifts are ceaſed, and no man hath any thing beyond the ordinary aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt to bleſs his ſtudy and his labours?

Knowledge of the ſcriptures.

BUT as in all other ſciences, ſo a great part of knowledge requiſite in a miniſter of Chriſt is, that he ſhould [t] be mighty in the ſcriptures, and ſo far [u] taught in the faithful word, as to be able thereby both to exhort the orthodox, and convince gainſayers: but as things are now, there is no way to underſtand the ſcriptures but by ſkill in the original tongues, conſulting fathers and comm ntators, and comparing one part of the Bible with another; and yet, unleſs he underſtands them, he cannot do his office well, becauſe all his doctrines and exhortations muſt be taken from thence. He muſt inſtruct the ignorant, confirm the faithful, comfort the ſad, ſtrengthen the weak, exhort the negligent, and reprove the wicked with divine ſentences, duly applied, and carefully gathered from the word of God, which gives ſtrength and authority to all his diſcourſes. Thus the miniſter of Chriſt's church ſhould be a good man, a learned man, well ſkilled in the ſcriptures, and (to give him more leiſure to attend on his duty) as little entangled with worldly cares, and ſecular buſineſs as poſſible. For * no man (as St Paul applies the ſimilitude to the clergy) that warreth, entangleth himſelf with the affairs of this life, that he may pleaſe him who hath choſen him to be a ſoldier.

Leiſure to ſtudy.

Solemn ordination.

THESE are the qualifications of the miniſters of Chriſt: but every one that has theſe qualifications, may not yet enter upon the work of a miniſter without a proper call and deſignation: for [x] when every other office of truſt and power, whether in a civil or military capacity, is conveyed unto men by ſome form of admiſſion and ſolemn inveſture; it is incongruous to think that theſe great offices of bleſſing the congregation, of abſolving the penitent, of ejecting the criminal, and of working together in this wiſe for the ſalvation of ſouls, ſhould be left to the diſcretion of every one, that either has preſumption enough to aſſume, or abilities enough to perform them. We have a very remarkable paſſage to this purpoſe in the hiſtory of the apoſtles, where we are informed that [y] the Holy Ghoſt ſaid, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them; and accordingly they faſted, and prayed, and laid their hands on them, and ſent them away. And ſo they went forth by the Holy Ghoſt. Now it is very obſervable here, that the Holy Ghoſt himſelf dictated, and appointed the ordination of Barnabas and Saul; that though perſons are called to the work of the miniſtry by the Spirit, and educated with proper gifts, yet laying on of hands is required; and farther, that thoſe who are lawfully

t Acts xviii. 24. u Tit. i. 9. * 2 Tim. ii. 4. x Comber on Ordination.
y Acts xiii. 2, &c.

yfully ſeparated, and ordained to the work of the miniſtry, e ſent forth by the Holy Ghoſt. [z] Theſe are natural deducns from this place of ſcripture, and from the whole it is ranal to infer, that it is not ſufficient for perſons to have the call the Spirit, but they muſt likewiſe be called by men, to exere the miniſterial function. Even Paul and Barnabas, we ſee, ough approved by the Spirit, and bleſſed with extraordinary aces, muſt have impoſition of hands to fit them for the work r which God deſigned them, and for which the Holy Ghoſt lled them: and from hence we may gather what it is that contutes a miniſter of the church of Chriſt at this day, and what the call that authoriſes him to diſcharge the public offices ereof.

IMPOSITION of hands was a ceremony of antient date: it was in uſe before the law, but among the Jews it was chiefly nployed as a figurative rite in ordaining elders, and thereby alifying them, either to be members of their ſanhedrim, or achers of the law. [b] Now, beſides the ſolemn deſignation of e perſon, on whom the hands are laid, we may imagine a reefold uſe of this ſymbolical rite. 1. To invocate the divine reſence and aſſiſtance to the perſon on whom the hands are id. 2. To deliver unto him a power to act in the office and pacity to which he is appointed. And, 3. To denote the congnment of him to the more immediate ſervice of God. The oſtles therefore, introducing this ceremony into the chriſtian urch, intended thereby to implore a bleſſing upon the new rdained perſons, that [c] the Spirit of the Lord might reſt upon em; the ſpirit of wiſdom and underſtanding, the ſpirit of unſel and might, the ſpirit of knowledge, and of the fear of e Lord: intended thereby, as ſtewards of the myſteries of hriſt, to give them full power and authority to officiate in the urch; and, by the ſign of ſuch delegation of power, to deare their future adminiſtrations valid: but above all, intended hereby to put them in mind of their preſent conſecration to the rvice of God; and upon that account, what an extraordinary eaſure of grace and holineſs is expected from them; that as ey are employed in ſuch a ſacred function, and ſeparated to ch a ſingular dignity, they ſhould excel all other degrees of en in their virtuous carriage and behaviour, that [d] they, ſeeng the light of their good works, may be inclined to follow it, and glorify their Father which is in heaven.

Impoſition of hands.

The nature and deſign of it.

III. ANOTHER branch of the commiſſion which our Saviour ave his apoſtles was to inſtruct their ſucceſſors, as he had done hem, in the nature of the ſacerdotal function; to acquaint hem with the powers and miniſtries belonging thereunto, and in

The powers and offices of Chriſt's miniſters.

z Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. a Gen. xlviii. 14. b Biſhop Stillingeet's Irenicum. c Iſa. xi. 2. d Matth. v. 16.

in what manner they were to behave towards the people committed to their charge. Now the

1. to preach

1. FIRST miniſterial act or power, mentioned by our Saviour in the commiſſion he gives his apoſtles, is that of preaching the goſpel. In obſervance of which commiſſion, we find St Paul telling the Corinthians, that he [e] was not ſent to baptize but to preach; meaning, that his chief buſineſs was to make converts by his ſermons and diſcourſes, which others of an inferior order were to receive into the church by baptiſm; and therefore he declares, that [f] a neceſſity was laid upon him; yea, woe unto me, ſays he, if I preach not the goſpel; whereupon he lays this ſtrict injunction upon his ſon Timothy; [g] I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge the quick and the dead, preach the word, be inſtant in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-ſuffering and doctrine. The biſhop indeed, as being the chief ſteward of the Lord's houſehold, was primarily concerned to give every member thereof his portion of food in due ſeaſon; but as the preſbyters were admitted to a copartnerſhip with him in the care of the church, ſo, both in the ſcripture, and primitive fathers, they are deſcribed as aſſiſtants in feeding the flock of Chriſt; and therefore there is no doubt to be made, but that the power of preaching belongs likewiſe to their office. Since deacons, however, were not ordained to be paſtors of the flock of Chriſt, preaching in the public congregation, which inſeparably accompanies the cure of ſouls, cannot of right belong to them, though they were often commiſſioned by the biſhop to exerciſe that function, when any of them were found ſufficiently qualified.

Laymen not ordinarily allowed to preach.

[h] THAT private chriſtians would inſtruct and admoniſh one another in their converſation and conferences is much to be wiſhed; and happy it were, both for themſelves and the church, if they would thus employ the time which is often ſpent in vain and trifling, not to ſay, ſinful and immodeſt talk: but that laymen may take upon them the office of preaching the goſpel of Chriſt in public congregations, except upon ſome emergent occaſions, we can by no means allow. [i] Before the church was ſettled indeed, and when extraordinary gifts prevailed, private men took upon them to expound the ſcriptures, and to teach and inſtruct publicly: in the times of perſecution too, when there was not a ſufficient number of preſbyters left, laymen were permitted to exerciſe that office; nor is there any queſtion to be made, but that they might do the ſame now, if there were the like raging perſecution, and chriſtians were deprived of their regular miniſters; but abſtracting from this, and the like cauſes, it is certainly true that laymen have no authority to adminiſter publicly in ſacred things: for, when St Paul ſays, [k] How then ſhall

e 1 Cor. i. 17. f Ibid. ix. 16. g 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2, &c. h Archbiſhop Potter on Church-government. i Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. k Rom. x. 14, 15.

ll they call on him in whom they have not believed? How ll they believe in him of whom they have not heard? How ll they hear without a preacher? And how ſhall they each except they be ſent? Theſe queſtions being an emphaal denial of the things in queſtion, he plainly enough intimates, t to preach the goſpel without being ſent is as impoſſible, in a riſtian or moral ſenſe, as it is in a natural ſenſe, for a man to lieve what he never heard, or to hear what was never eached, or ſpoken to him. So that before men can preach th authority, they muſt ſhew their commiſſion, which is a relar ordination conferred by impoſition of hands.

The manner of the apoſtles preaching.

IN what manner the apoſtles preached may beſt be learned m the effects of it: for when St Peter, at one ſermon, * conrted three thouſand ſouls; when St Paul [l] baffled all the rning of Athens, and finally ſucceeded wherever he came; hen the ſeveral ſynagogues at Jeruſalem [m] were not able to ſiſt the wiſdom and Spirit by which St Stephen ſpake; when e whole Roman empire, in ſhort, in a ſmall tract of time, was er-run, and ſome in every place converted by the labours of e firſt planters of the goſpel; it muſt needs be owned, that their ſpeech, and their preaching, as St Paul expreſſes it, was demonſtration of the Spirit and power. As their buſineſs as to convert the world to the chriſtian faith, their method as vaſtly different from what has obtained now. They made eir text (if we may ſo ſay) any hint, any occurrence, that eſented them with an opportunity of proving the crucified ſus to be the Son of God. St Paul, from the inſcription of altar • TO THE UNKNOWN GOD, took occaſion to explain d magnify the divine attributes, and thence gently to fall on the particular tenets of chriſtianity. His uſual way was to reaſon with the people to whom he addreſſed himſelf, out the ſcriptures, opening, and alledging, that Chriſt muſt needs ave ſuffered, and riſen from the dead, and that Jeſus, whom ey preached, was the Chriſt.

How it altered.

AFTER churches were ſettled, and congregations gathered, e method of preaching of courſe varied; and ſermons were mmonly then the expoſition of ſome ſelect portion of ſcripre which was read in the aſſembly that day. Sometimes they preached on whole chapters, or a very large portion of em, and proceeded in order through a whole book, inſiſting n ſeveral parts of it at different times. Sometimes [r] they reached without any chapter or text at all, only exhorting the eople to ſome religious and virtuous practice, or declaiming againſt

* Acts ii. 41. l Ibid. xvii. 22, &c. m Ibid. vi. 10. n 1 Cor. ii. 4. o Acts vii. 23. p Ibid. ver. 2, 3. q Of this nature are Chryſoſtom's Homilies, or Expoſitions on the book of Geneſis, on the Pſalms, and on St Matthew, all which were diſcourſes to the people. And Origen, and Baſil, and other fathers did the ſame. Of this ſort are ſome of the ſermons of Chryſoſtom, Ambroſe, Auguſtin, Gregory the Great, &c. Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I.

againſt ſome prevailing vice, or diſcourſing upon ſome emergent occaſion; and, at other times, they entertained their audience with general diſcourſes of the truth and reaſonableneſs of chriſtianity, againſt Jews and Pagans. Theſe were compoſitions ſtudied and elaborate, but their preaching for the moſt part was popular, eaſy, and extemporary. The manner of preaching on the places of ſcripture which were read to the people, as proper leſſons for the day, continued in the church until, in the time of Charles the Great, about the middle of the ninth century, poſtillary diſcourſes (as they were called) or comments upon the goſpels and epiſtles, came in their room, and theſe remained until the reformation. When this flat and inſipid way began to be laid aſide, and as churches recovered out of ignorance and error, preaching revived, and was a long while improving, till it ſettled at laſt in the method, we now uſe, of taking only a verſe or two as a text, which is firſt expounded, and then enlarged upon from topics of reaſon and ſcripture, and ſo applied. By this means ſermons are [s] reduced, 1. To a plain opening of the ſenſe of the text, in a few ſhort illuſtrations of its coherence with what goes before and after, and of the parts whereof it is compoſed: to which is joined, 2. A clear ſtating of ſuch propoſitions as ariſe out of it, as to their nature, truth, and reaſonableneſs: to all which, 3. Applications are added, tending to the reproving, directing, encouraging, or comforting the hearers, according to the ſeveral occaſions that are offered. This is indeed all that can be truly intended in preaching, viz. to make ſome portions of ſcripture to be rightly underſtood; to make thoſe truths contained in them to be more fully apprehended; and then to lay the whole matter home to the conſciences of the hearers; for [t] to teach clearly, to convince ſtrongly, and to perſuade powerfully (as a great maſter of the art informs us) is the principal, if not the only ſcope of a divine orator.

What it is now.

Catechiſing.

How eminent the divines of the church of England are in this kind of performance we leave to the learned of other churches, who have attained to the knowledge of the Engliſh tongue, to declare and admire; and ſhall only go on to obſerve that there is another form and method of teaching the goſpel, which our excellency in ſermonizing ſhould not ſuperſede; and that is, inſtructing the younger, and more ignorant ſort, in the great and fundamental principles of chriſtianity, which we call Catechiſing: an office not ſo appropriated to the ſacred function, but that all parents and maſters of families may, and ought to execute it, but what, in the earlieſt times of chriſtanity, when religion was not ſo well underſtood by the laity, was generally devolved upon the clergy, and in ſome places upon perſons of [u] the

s Burnet's Paſtoral Care. t Wilkins's Eccleſiaſtes.

he greateſt eminence in the church, whoſe buſineſs it was to in-uct ſuch as were called Catechumens in thoſe days, and thoſe ere of two ſorts: 1. Thoſe that were converts and proſelytes to riſtianity from Gentiliſm, and Judaiſm, whom theſe catechiſts ere to inſtruct, before they were baptized, as being perſons ult, and capable of underſtanding the nature of the chriſtian th: and, 2. Thoſe that were children of chriſtians, and born the body of the church, who, being firſt baptized, as they vanced in years, were taught the rudiments of religion, and ained up in the knowledge of Chriſt, till they were prepared r confirmation, and thence admitted to the holy communion.

IN what manner the catechiſts proceeded in the inſtitution of eir ſcholars and hearers, we have not that clear account from tiquity as to determine; but this we have ſome countenance om ſcripture to ſuppoſe, that having given them a compendium, ſummary of the chriſtian doctrine, which the apoſtle calls the Form of ſound Words which was delivered to them, to diligently peruſed, if not got memoriter; they afterwards amined, whether they underſtood what they ſaid or repeated, d where they found their underſtanding fail, there they ex-ained and inculcated (as [x] the word *catechize* ſeems to ſignify) e ſame thing over and over again, in different words perhaps, d ſuch as they thought more eaſy and familiar to their appre-enſions; and hence, very probably, the conveying of the know-dge of the principles of religion, by way of queſtion and ſwer, came to be named Catechizing. The points which ey firſt began with, the author to the Hebrews hath ſet down this order: [y] Therefore leaving the principles of the doc-ine of Chriſt, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again e foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith to-ards God, of the doctrine of baptiſms, and of laying on of nds, and of reſurrection of the dead, and of eternal judg-ent. Here are ſix catechetical heads, or fundamental rinciples of the doctrine of Chriſt. Repentance, which in-udes in it all the doctrines relating to regeneration, ſanctifi-tion, mortification, and all holy converſation and godlineſs: ith, which implies our full aſſent to all the truths of the goſ-el, with a firm confidence and reliance on the mercy of God, nd the merits of Jeſus Chriſt: baptiſms, which denote the

The primitive manner of it.

u Euſebius acquaints us that there were very eminent perſons in the church ho undertook this neceſſary office. He relates, that, at Alexandria, the firſt atechiſt was Patenus, a chriſtian convert from the Stoic philoſophy, after him rigen, in the famous ſchool of Alexandria, had the office of inſtructing late nverts to the chriſtian faith. Optatus was appointed by St Cyprian to be a ublic catechiſt, and inſtructor of the youth, and St Jerom mentions Gregory azianzen and others, who had this office in his time, and tells us, that he mſelf was inſtructed and catechiſed by them. Edwards's Body of Divinity, ol. I. * 2 Tim. i. 13. and Rom. vi. 17. x It is derived from *Katecheoo*, to ſound, or ſound often in the ear of the learner, the principles to be imbibed nd fixed in his mind and memory. Bray's Lectures on the Church Catechiſm. Heb. vi. 1, 2.

ſacred inſtitution and ordinance of admitting children and others into the church of Chriſt, by waſhing, or ſprinkling with water; as well as the other ſolemn ſacrament of the Lord's Supper: impoſition of hands in confirming the adult, in ordaining miniſters, and in conferring the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, which was cuſtomary in the apoſtles times: the reſurrection of the dead, which comprizes all our comforts and aſſurances relating to another life: and eternal judgment, whereby we ſhall be irreverſibly conſigned to miſery or happineſs for ever, according as the tenor of our actions ſhall be found to be: theſe, I ſay, were the principles which the catechiſts firſt propounded to their ſcholars, and made them perfect in, before they proceeded to the more abſtruſe and myſterious articles, ſuch as the doctrine of the Trinity, the hypoſtatic union of the two natures, &c. and from this one place, as Calvin in his Comment upon it obſerves, we may infer, that the cuſtom of catechizing was of apoſtolic inſtitution.

The uſe and neglect of it.

OF what ſingular uſe and neceſſity this method of inſtruction is, needs no detail of arguments to prove. "The reaſon "of the thing itſelf, ſays our late excellent metropolitan, ſufficiently ſpeaks it; [z] and yet, alas! how has this prudent and "uſeful method been ſlighted by many, and neglected by "more: and inſtead of theſe catechetical inſtitutions, a ſecond "ſermon been introduced for the afternooon, and a new ſort "of teachers ſet up, under a new character of Lecturers to "preach it, and that oftentimes, not ſo much to the real benefit, "as to the fancies and inclinations of thoſe by whom they are "to be paid! I cannot ſay (as the judicious prelate proceeds) "that this is altogether contrary to our preſent eſtabliſhment, "becauſe [a] the laſt act of uniformity has given directions for "the licencing and allowing of them; but ſure I am, it is a "manifeſt encroachment upon our good old conſtitution, which "knew no ſuch perſons, nor made any proviſion for them; "and the reſult has been, that the afternoon-ſermon has almoſt "quite thrown out the much better and more profitable exerciſe of catechiſing, which has both the laws of the realm, and "the canons of the church on its ſide; whereas the other has "neither." But this is an abuſe, which might as eaſily be reformed, as complained of, were but the canons, which require of the clergy the weekly performance of this duty, by the governors of the church, unanimouſly put in execution.

2. To adminiſter the ſacraments.

2. ANOTHER religious act, which properly belongs to theſe ſervants of God, is the adminiſtration of the evangelical ſacraments. It was to his apoſtles indeed, and, in them, to their ſucceſſors, that our Saviour gave the commiſſion of baptizing all nations, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, and of conſecrating

z Archbiſhop Wake's Commentary on the Church Catechiſm. a 13 Car. II. c. v.

nſecrating and adminiſtring the holy euchariſt in remembrance
f him; but yet it is evident, that this office was not ſo confined
the apoſtolic order, as that none but they were allowed to
xecute it. For, even in the apoſtles days, we find not only
Philip, who was but a deacon, baptizing at Samaria, but St
eter himſelf commanding the brethren with him, who certain-
were no apoſtles, to [c] baptize thoſe Gentile-converts, upon
hom the Holy Ghoſt deſcended, and St Paul affirming, [d] that
baptized none in the church of Corinth, though himſelf
anted it, except Criſpus, Gaius, and the houſehold of Stepha-
us; which is a plain argument (as we hinted before) that when
e apoſtles converted men to the chriſtian faith, they generally
rdered them to be baptized by the inferior miniſters of the
hurch. There is no doubt to be made then, but that prieſts
nd deacons are both inveſted with a power of baptizing; but
hether laymen had the ſame, is a queſtion that has been much
gitated, and the reſult of the whole matter ſeems to be this;
[e] That in caſes of extreme exigence, when neither deacon, Laymen, when allowed to baptize.
or preſbyter, nor biſhop can be procured, laymen were allow-
d to adminiſter this ſacrament; that ſo none might be debarred
om admiſſion into the new covenant that were diſpoſed, and
ualified to receive it: but the church's allowing this to lay-
en, only in caſes of neceſſity, is a plain argument, that none
ad a ſtanding authority to adminiſter it, but ſuch as were in
oly orders.

THE conſecration of the euchariſt, when any of the apoſtles Why deacons might not conſecrate.
ere preſent, was without all doubt ordinarily performed by
em; but conſidering how faſt chriſtianity increaſed, and how
equently chriſtians did then partake of this ſacrament, it is not
be ſuppoſed, that the apoſtles could be preſent in all places,
here it was adminiſtred, nor conſequently, that they could
onſecrate it in every particular congregation; and therefore
ere is no queſtion to be made, but that the conſecration, as
ell as the adminiſtration of it, was ordinarily performed by the
nferior preſbyters, in the abſence of the apoſtles and biſhops:
ut the queſtion then is, how came the deacons who were per-
itted to adminiſter the other ſacrament, never to be allowed
conſecrate the Lord's Supper? The other ſacrament indeed
as not only one of the loweſt miniſtries, and therefore commit-
d by the apoſtles to thoſe of the loweſt order; but, being the
ite of admiſſion into the church, was thought more neceſſary
an the Lord's Supper, [f] which, among the moſt antient fathers
as always ſuppoſed to ſucceed in the room of ſacrifices: and
herefore, as none, beſide the high-prieſt, and inferior prieſts
ere permitted to offer ſacrifices under the Jewiſh law; ſo the
Lord's

b Acts viii. 12. c Ibid. x. 48. d 1 Cor. i. 13, &c. e Scott's Mediator.
Archbiſhop Potter on Church government.

Lord's Supper was conſecrated by none, but biſhops and preſbyters, who alone are prieſts in the chriſtian ſenſe of that name.

3. To offer up the people's prayers.

3. ANOTHER religious act, which has always been appropriated to the clergy, is to offer up the public prayers and interceſſions of chriſtian aſſemblies; for to be ſure, none can be authoriſed to perform the public duties of the church, but ſuch only as are ſet apart, and ordained to be the public officers of it. For that prieſts of all nations are interceſſors between God and men, who communicate the laws of God, and impart his bleſſings to the people; and, on the other hand, convey the people's devotions and adorations unto God, is a generally received notion; and from hence Philo [g] obſerves of the Jewiſh high-prieſt, "that "the law required him to be raiſed above human nature to a "proximity with God, that being placed, as it were, in a middle "ſtation between God and man, he might ſupplicate God in "behalf of men, and convey unto men the graces of God."

IN his own cloſet indeed, every man is his own orator, and in private families, the performance of divine worſhip is incumbent on them, to whom the care and government of theſe families belong; but in the public congregations of chriſtians, divine worſhip muſt be only celebrated by thoſe, to whom it has pleaſed God to commit that office. And indeed, if nothing be regarded, beſides the decent and orderly performance of this duty, this alone would make it neceſſary, that the prieſt ſhould be the mouth of the congregation, otherwiſe it is not poſſible, that when chriſtians meet together, they ſhould have one prayer and one ſupplication, as the antients call it; and ſince there is no way for a congregation to join in one prayer, but by attending to one ſpeaker, for whom can it be ſo proper to preſide in public prayers, as for thoſe, whom God has authoriſed to govern the church, and to officiate in all other parts of divine ſervice? and, accordingly, we may obſerve, that [d] the four and twenty elders, in the Revelation, who repreſent the miniſters of the chriſtian church, have every one of them golden vials, full of incenſe, which is the prayers of the ſaints.

4. To ordain, which was peculiar to biſhops.

THERE are two eccleſiaſtical offices more, the ordination of ſuch, as are appointed to ſerve in the church, and the confirmation of ſuch, as have been baptized and inſtructed in the chriſtian faith; both done by the impoſition of hands, and both productive to the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghoſt, which are not, as other miniſterial acts, to be performed in common, but are peculiarly the work of the biſhops and governors of the church. [e] And indeed, as to the firſt, if we may be allowed to reaſon from the conſtitution and univerſal practice of civil ſocieties, we muſt conclude, that the power of ordaining miniſters belongs to the biſhops, who are the chief governors of the church, becauſe the

g De Monarchia, Lib. II. d Rev. v. 8. e Archbiſhop Potter on Church-government.

power of conſtituting ſubordinate magiſtrates belongs to the reme governors of all civil ſocieties; nor can it be thought ſonant to reaſon, that they, who exerciſe any authority, ether in church or ſtate, ſhould derive their authority from , but thoſe, in whom the ſupreme authority is lodged.

URSUANT to this, we find in the goſpels, that whilſt our iour lived on earth, he reſerved the power of ordaining mi- ers to himſelf, and that though he gave the apoſtles, and enty diſciples a commiſſion to preach, he never allowed them communicate that commiſſion to any other. Upon his re- val, the apoſtles, who were the chief viſible governors of church, ordained miniſters: for as they went about preach- through countries and cities (as Clemens Romanus [f] calls it) y conſtituted their firſt-fruits, *i. e.* the firſt of their diſciples ny place, when they had proved them by the Spirit, to be biſhops and deacons of thoſe who ſhould believe. After ir demiſe, ordination continued, where they had left it, in ſcopal hands, nor do we find any inſtance, either in ſcripture antiquity, of inferior orders pretending to that prerogative. Paul tells Timothy indeed, that [g] the gifts, which was in him, s given him by prophecy, with the laying on the hands of the ſbytery; whence ſome may conclude, that the preſbytery or- ned even thoſe who were to ordain others: but it muſt be nembered, that the gift, which is here ſaid to have been con- red by the hands of the preſbytery, in another place, is affirm- to have been given him [h] by the laying on of St Paul's nds; ſo that the utmoſt, which can be inferred from this paſ- e, is, that preſbyters ſometimes, together with an apoſtle or hop, laid their hands upon the perſon to be ordained; but t they always did ſo, or that they ever did it without a biſhop, re is not the leaſt colour to conclude.

THE truth is, that ordination, in St Cyprian's time, was perly the biſhop's right, we have the confeſſion of ſome of ableſt patrons of preſbytery; and from the apoſtles to Cy- an's days, the biſhops, as we ſaid before, were ſo poor, and ſecuted, and pious withal, that we cannot ſuppoſe they would, that period, have uſurped, and monopolized an authority t had not been left them by their predeceſſors. And, in like manner, that the rite of confirmation is the biſhop's ſole prero- ative, we may perceive by this one inſtance, that, [k] when St ilip, by preaching and doing miracles, had converted the Sa- ritans, and afterwards baptized them, St Peter and St John o of the apoſtles, were ſent to lay hands on them; upon which s ſaid, that they received the Holy Ghoſt: from whence it ears, that this miniſtry of confirmation appertained to the apoſtles

5. And to confirm.

[f] Ep. 1. ad Corinth. [g] 1 Tim. iv. 14. [h] 2 Tim. i. 6. [i] Blundel, citat. a Hammond, in Epiſt. præfix. Diſſert. de Epiſcop. & Daille de Cult. Latin. [g]. Liv. II. c. xiii. [k] Acts viii. 12, 17.

apoſtles only, ſince St Philip though a worker of miracles, a preacher, a prime deacon, and if we may believe St Cyprian o of the ſeventy-two diſciples, would not preſume to aſſume it but left it to the apoſtles, as their peculiar province.

THUS beſides the buſineſs of ordination and confirmation, whic is peculiar to the biſhops; to preach the goſpel, to adminiſter th ſacraments, to bleſs the congregation, and to offer up the praye of the people, is the common office and employment of the whol clergy: and how ſacred and tremendous an office this is, how much learning, and wiſdom, and zeal, and holineſs is require to the due performance of it, is what we ſhall juſt take upon u to ſuggeſt.

What is required of a divine, in the execution of his office.

WHEN the prophet [l] Malachi tells us, that the prieſts lip ſhould keep or preſerve knowledge, becauſe he is the meſſenge of the Lord of Hoſts; there is ſomething, methinks, more em phatical in the expreſſion, than is commonly imagined: it ſeem to imply, that the prieſt ſhould be a kind of repoſitory, or trea ſury of ſcience, richly furniſhed with knowledge himſelf, an able likewiſe to furniſh and ſupply abundantly the wants of thoſ that ſhall ſeek the law at his mouth, or have at any time re courſe to him for inſtruction in their duty. Our bleſſed Saviou (though it be in a parable) has excellently expounded this text [m] Every ſcribe, ſays he, that is inſtructed in the kingdom o heaven, *i. e.* furniſhed and prepared for the preaching of the goſpel, is like a man that is an houſholder, which bringeth forth out of his treaſure, things new and old: he is like an houſholder, who, for the maintenance of his family, and the entertainment of his gueſts all the year long, is ſuppoſed to have an *apotheke* or repoſitory for proviſions, and there they have laid in a grea ſtore, and abundance of all ſorts and kinds, in order to keep a well-furniſhed table for all comers: and, indeed if we conſider a little the compaſs of his profeſſion, and the nature of the ſcience which he teaches, we ſhall ſoon be convinced of this truth. The ſcience which he teaches is theology, the queen of ſciences, and perfection of all other knowledge, as the antients call it: and here, to give our thoughts a tract in ſo ſpacious a field, we may divide it into poſitive, polemical, moral and caſuiſtical.

Learning.

[n] POSITIVE divinity, or the knowledge of thoſe ſpeculative truths, which are revealed in ſcripture, is ſo neceſſary to this profeſſion, that a man can no more be a divine without it, than he can be a grammarian, who underſtands not the very firſt elements of grammar; and yet of ſo abſtruſe and ſublime a nature are theſe truths, that rightly to apprehend, and clearly to explain them to capacities even of a moderate ſize, is no very eaſy matter. Polemical, or controverſial divinity, eſpecially in theſe days, when there are ſo many [o] vain and unruly talkers and deceivers, whoſe mouths muſt be ſtopped, is what he muſt be

l Chap. ii. 7. m Matth. xiii. 52. n Bull's Sermons, Vol. I. o Tit i. 10,

cquainted with, otherwiſe theſe deceivers, when they ſpread
r erroneous and ſtrange doctrines, will ſubvert whole houſes,
, with triumph and oſtentation enough, carry ſouls captive
the diſgrace of his function, yea, of truth itſelf, which is
nded through his ſides, and bleeds through his weakneſs
folly. Moral, or practical divinity, is to furniſh him with
matter and ſubſtance both of his private exhortations, and
lic diſcourſes; and caſuiſtical, with an ability to reſolve his
ple, what their duty is, in difficult and perplexed caſes.
thout a ſufficient knowledge of theſe, he can by no means
ceed in his profeſſion; and yet to attain a competent know-
ge herein, he muſt know moſt of the learned languages,
erein the holy ſcriptures were written, or into which they
e been tranſlated; he muſt be well read in all parts of natu-
, rational and moral philoſophy; well read in the claſſical
hors, eſpecially the orators and poets, whence excellent
tter may be extracted; and in ſome of the choiceſt critics,
ich treat of the words and phraſes, and more eſpecially of thoſe
s and cuſtoms, that tend to illuſtrate the holy text. Nor
ſt he be unacquainted with hiſtory of all ſorts, and eſpecially
h the hiſtoryof thoſe ages, which are coincident with the times,
l of thoſe countries, which are adjacent to places, made men-
n of in ſcripture, to which geography and chronology will
ceedingly conduce. In ſhort, there are few parts of human
rning, that are not, ſome way or other, neceſſary to accom-
ſh a divine: and from hence it follows, that he ſhould be
poſſeſſed

As a divine, ſays a very good judge, he muſt be well verſed in all writers,
ematical, textual, hiſtorical, polemical, and practical. The ſyſtematical
the catechiſts, antient and modern, and the authors of whole bodies of
inity. The textual are the learned and laborious commentaries of the
y fathers, and later orthodox divines. The hiſtorical are ſuch as have writ
ſacred hiſtory of the Jewiſh and chriſtian church in general, or the lives of
fathers, and moſt eminent biſhops and doctors; together with the collectors
the councils, and eccleſiaſtical laws of chriſtian princes. The polemical
the antient apologiſts, and thoſe orthodox fathers who defended the chriſtian
gion againſt Paganiſm and old hereſies; as alſo ſuch as have maintained
doctrine and rites of the reformed church of England, againſt papiſts and
enters. Finally, the practical authors are the editors and explainers of
rgies, the compilers of offices for private devotion, and ſuch as write about
ty, and an holy life in general, or concerning any particular virtue or vice.
d that he may not loſe time, either by an ill method of ſtudy, or an ill choice
books in all faculties, there are ſome very uſeful writers, ſuch as Hug.
otii, & alior. Diſſertationes de Studiis Inſtituend. Apparatus ad Theolog. per
ph. Penton, Biſhop Barlow's Directions for Study, Dr Bray's Parochial Li-
ry, and Biſhop Wilkins's Eccleſiaſtes, &c. which will direct him in theſe
tters. But he muſt not forget to keep common places, or methodical repo-
ries of all the choice things he would remember; for which there are very good
es in Drexelius [Aurifodina, Tom. IV.] but the beſt method of common-
cing is that by our countryman Mr Locke. Let the young divine then be
vided with a bible, a concordance, a common-prayer book, and the articles
d canons all interleaved, with a large common-place-book, that may lie
dy: the 1ſt, to note down all choice explications of any text; the 2d,
the ſignification of words and phraſes; the 3d, for what is agreeable to our
ces, eſpecially in the primitive fathers; the 4th, for ſuch things, in antiquity
chiefly,

poſſeſſed of a liberal maintenance, in order to furniſh him wi
ſome of the beſt books, in all ſciences, both ſecular and ſacred
For what the Italian proverb ſays of a well-furniſhed houſe
[q] that it makes a notable dame, is very true of a well-filled ſtudy
that it makes an eminent divine: and doubtleſs we muſt aſcrib
the ignorance of ſome, and the looſeneſs of others in holy order
chiefly to the want of this; becauſe it cannot be ſuppoſed, the
men of ingenuous education ſhould either be ſo dull, as not t
improve with ſuch helps, or ſo wretched, as to keep mean com-
pany, when they have at home the benefit of converſing wit
the moſt learned and beſt men of all ages.

Wiſdom. 2. BUT learning is not the only qualification in a divine.
As he is the paſtor and teacher of a people, he muſt be endue
with a ſpirit of wiſdom, leſt, by any indiſcretion of his, he ob-
ſtructs that, which ought to be his great deſign and buſineſs,
the ſalvation of thoſe ſouls that are committed to his charge.
And therefore [r] he muſt be wiſe, ſo to frame his diſcourſes,
eſpecially in public, that he ſpeak nothing which may either
offend the weak, or give advantage to the malicious; that his
ſermons may not only be good in themſelves, but adapted and
fitted to the neceſſities of his hearers. He muſt be wiſe in the
government of his carriage and actions, diſtinguiſhing eſpecially
between lawfulneſs and expediency, and ſhunning, not only that
which is directly ſinful, but whatſoever is ſcandalous and offen-
ſive. He muſt be wiſe in his common converſe with his people,
that he be neither of too eaſy, nor of too moroſe and difficult
acceſs; but eſpecially he muſt be careful of this, in his free
converſation, that he indulge not himſelf any liberty more than
ordinary among thoſe that will make an ill uſe of what was ne-
ver ill intended. He muſt be wiſe in the choice of his friends,
not to admit any man into that number who may reflect a diſpa-
ragement on his perſon or function. He muſt be wiſe eſpe-
cially in the government of his own family; for, as the apoſtle
excellently reaſons, 'If a man know not how to rule his own
houſe, how ſhall he take care of the church of God? He muſt
be wiſe to inquire into the ſtate of his flock, to diſcern their
particular tempers and conſtitutions; and even to ſearch into
their hearts and ſecret inclinations: and laſtly, he muſt be wiſe
to adminiſter private counſels and reproofs, duly obſerving the
circumſtances of time, of place, of perſon, of diſpoſition; for
[t] a word fitly ſpoken, ſays the wiſe man, is like apples of gold
in pictures of ſilver.

3. THERE

chiefly, as vindicate our doctrine and diſcipline; and the 5th, for a general repoſitory of all philological and moral notions; by the daily uſe of which a ſtudious man will not only ſurely retain whatever he reads, even to his old age, but will always be furniſhed, by conſulting theſe collections of his own, with variety of proper matter for ſermons, diſputations, or diſcourſes upon any ſubject in a few hours time.' Comber on Ordination.

[q] Camera adorna ſa Donna Savia, Prov. Ital. G. Torrian. [r] Bull's Ser-
mons, Vol. I. [s] 1 Tim. iii. 5. [t] Prov. xxv. 11.

3. THERE are theſe two qualifications more, requiſite in the miniſter of Chriſt, without which all his wiſdom and learning will be of ſmall avail, and that is holineſs in the tenor of his life, and zeal in the execution of his duty; for a prieſt, that is not cloathed with righteouſneſs, though otherwiſe richly adorned with all the ornaments of human and divine literature, and thoſe gilded over with the rays of ſeraphic prudence and ſagacity, is yet but a naked and deſpicable creature, of no authority, no intereſt, no uſe, or ſervice in the church of God. It is a black and diſmal picture, which the prophet gives us of the ſhepherds of Iſrael, [u] Wo to the ſhepherds of Iſrael that do feed themſelves: ſhould not the ſhepherds feed the flock? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, but ye feed not the flock. The diſeaſed have ye not ſtrengthened; neither have ye healed that which was ſick; neither have ye bound up that which was broken; neither have ye brought again that which was driven away; neither have ye ſought that which was loſt; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them; wherefore I am againſt the ſhepherds, ſaith the Lord. And well may his face be againſt them, when by their looſe and irregular lives, they make the offering of the Lord to be abhorred; or by their ſupine negligence, ſuffer the ſouls, committed to their cuſtody, to fall into perdition. St Paul, taking leave of the biſhops that met him at Epheſus, gives them this in charge: * Take heed to yourſelves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghoſt has made you overſeers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchaſed with his own blood. [x] The words are very ſolemn, and the conſideration, enforcing them, is a mighty one. They import the obligations of the clergy, both to an exactneſs in their own deportment, and to earneſt and conſtant labours, in imitation of the apoſtle, who, during the three years of his ſtay in this place, had been ſerving God with all humility of mind, with many tears and temptations; had taught them publicly, and from houſe to houſe; and had not ceaſed to warn every one, both day and night: wherefore I take you to record, ſays he, this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. Holineſs and zeal.

To excite his care and diligence therefore, let every man appointed to this holy office think, and think often, that he is accountable for ſouls committed to his charge: for ſouls! methinks in that one word there is a ſermon; for immortal ſouls! for precious ſouls, one whereof is of more worth than all the world, beſides the price of the blood of the Son of God: "Have "always therefore in remembrance, as our church exhorts the "new-ordained prieſt, how great a treaſure is committed to "your charge; for they are the ſheep of Chriſt, which he "bought with his death, and for whom he ſhed his blood. "The church and congregation whom ye ſerve is his body: "and

[u] Ezek. xxxiv. 2, &c. * Acts xx. 28, &c. [x] Biſhop Burnet's Paſtoral Care.

" and if it ſhall happen that the church, or any member there-
" of ſhould take any hurt or hindrance by reaſon of your ne-
" glect, you know the greatneſs of the fault, and alſo the hor-
" rible puniſhment that will enſue." [y] Feed therefore the flock of God which is among you, taking the overſight thereof, not by conſtraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind: neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being enſamples to the flock, and when the chief ſhepherd ſhall appear, ye ſhall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

4. To appoint religious rites, proved from reaſon.

IV. ANOTHER branch of the apoſtles commiſſion is, that they and their ſucceſſors ſhould make ſuch laws and conſtitutions; ſhould appoint ſuch rites, and impoſe ſuch cenſures as ſhould be thought conduceable to the good government of the church.— [z] For this is implied in the very nature of government, that in itſelf it ſhould have a legiſlative power to command and oblige the ſubject to do, and forbear ſuch things, as it ſhall judge conducive to the preſervation or diſturbance of the commonweal; without which power no government can be enabled to obtain its end, which is the good of the public. Since therefore the church, by Chriſt's own inſtitution, is a regular and well-ordered ſociety of men, either we muſt ſuppoſe that its government is defective, which is a ſad imputation upon our Saviour's wiſdom, or allow that it has a legiſlative power inherent in it. This power however muſt not be ſuppoſed to extend to every thing: [a] it cannot change any of thoſe laws which God has given us: it cannot impoſe any article of faith or rule of moral duty; nor can it preſcribe any condition of ſalvation which is not either expreſsly contained in the ſcriptures, or, by neceſſary conſequence, may be deduced from them. All that it pretends to do, is to limit thoſe things which are left indefinite, and to preſcribe ſuch rules as are found requiſite for the maintenance of peace, order, and decency: and if in theſe particulars it has no power, it has in effect no power at all. The ſcripture is very frequent and expreſs in requiring us to ſubmit ourſelves to thoſe that rule over us, and watch for our ſouls; but now there is no room for this ſubmiſſion, if we will not allow them to interpoſe their authority in ſuch things as in themſelves are confeſſed to be indifferent. [b] What the ſcriptures command, that we are obliged to do, though our governors ſhould not require it, or though they ſhould forbid it: what the ſcriptures prohibit, that, though the church ſhould exact it, we may not do, becauſe we are to obey God rather than man: either therefore the governors of the church have authority in things, neither commanded nor forbidden by the word of God, or, as we ſaid, they have no authority at all. That they have no original, abſolute, deſpotic authority over the conſciences of men, is readily

y 1 Pet. v. 2, &c. z Scott's Mediator. a Archbiſhop Potter on Church-government. b Biſhop Smalridge's Sermons.

eadily acknowledged; but they that have a derived, delegated, mited authority in ſuch things as God hath left undetermined y any rules of ſcripture, ſo that their deciſions, when no ways epugnant to God's word, ought to be obeyed by all their ſubects, is plain from all thoſe ſcriptures which require ſubjection o higher powers. Primarily and of itſelf the law of God only bliges our conſciences, becauſe God only hath a direct power ver the conſcience; but eccleſiaſtical laws do alſo oblige us ndirectly, by force of the law of God. God, by appointing overnors in the church, hath directed us to whom we ought o pay our obedience: when therefore, in ſuch caſes, we obey he commands of our governors, we do not ſo properly obey hem as God: either therefore we muſt expunge out of holy rit all thoſe paſſages which make obedience to governors a art of our chriſtian duty, or we muſt ſubmit to their commands n obſervance of thoſe uſages which God hath no where forbid, nd which they, by that authority wherewith God hath inveſted hem, do think it proper to enjoin.

[c] WHO that God is, whom alone we are to worſhip; with what affection of mind we ought to worſhip him; with what evotion of ſoul, and humiliation of body we are to perform our worſhip to him, we are perfectly inſtructed by the ſcriptures: ut concerning the circumſtances of worſhip, in what place we hall meet together to worſhip him, at what times we ſhall aſemble at ſuch a place, what particular geſture of body we ſhall ſe, what he who officiates ſhall wear in the public worſhip, the criptures no where determine. Either therefore we may lawlly do ſomething which the ſcriptures do not expreſsly comnand, or it is not lawful for us to worſhip God at any fixed ime, and to ſay our prayers together in any appointed place; ecauſe the ſcriptures have no where determined the hour of he day when we ſhould meet to worſhip God; nor the preciſe lace where we ſhould pray unto him; and therefore in things f this nature, the conſtant cuſtom has been for churches in all ges to be determined by the wiſdom of their governors.

[d] THE religion of the Jews was delivered to one nation, the hief parts of it confined to one place, and the rites and cereonies of their worſhip ſtrictly limited, leſt they ſhould fall into he idolatrous practices of the neighbours round about them: nd yet we find in our Saviour's time many rites (ſuch as the whole conſtitution of their ſynagogues, with offices and ſervices ppropriated to them, the inſtitution of baptiſm, and many obervances in the paſchal ſolemnity) which were not preſcribed y Moſes, nor mentioned in any part of the Old Teſtament; nd theſe our bleſſed Lord was ſo far from condemning, merely ecauſe they were ſuperadded to the law, that himſelf obſerved many

The practice of the Jewiſh,

[c] Smalridge's Sermons. [d] Archbiſhop Potter on Church-government, and Biſhop Burnet on the Articles.

many of them: for he not only frequented the temple service, but their synagogues likewise; and consecrated both their baptism, and their custom of blessing bread and wine, after the paschal supper, to be fœderal rites of the christian covenant. And if so much liberty was allowed in so limited a religion, it seems highly suitable to the sublimer state of the christian liberty, that there should be room left for such appointments or alterations, as the different state of time and places should require.

and christian church

IF we look into the practice of the apostles, we shall find, that, besides the standing rules of the gospel, they appointed sundry things, as the several occasions of the churches under their care seemed to require. That converts from Gentilism should abstain from blood, in order to their more easy incorporation with the Jews; that there should be an order of deaconesses, who should minister to the first preachers of the gospel, and assist them in converting, or baptizing women; that it was customary, by a kiss of charity, for the primitive christians to express their mutual love to one another; that in several of St Paul's epistles, especially those to the Corinthians, he prescribes particular rules for the decency of divine worship, and other things, which were not determined by Christ; and that, in the next ages after the apostles, the governors of the church used the same liberty, and made several laws and canons for the more orderly conducting it, long before the emperors became christians, is too plain to need any proof. [e] Nay, in some cases, they exercised this authority with universal approbation, even to the laying aside apostolic usages; for the kiss of charity, and the order of deaconesses have for many ages been disused, and the world is satisfied, to this day, with the reasons for letting them fall. And if the church may lay aside apostolic practices, in matters relating to order, it has certainly authority to make new rules about such things; since it is an higher attempt, to alter what was settled by the apostles themselves, than to establish new rules in matters that are left undetermined.

Censures.

AND if the church has authority to make laws, it can hardly be supposed, but that it has a power to put them in execution; to censure offenders, and to exclude them from its communion, in case they are incorrigible. When the Jewish law was in its full force and vigour, there was no need for excluding notorious offenders from all civil and religious communion, because such persons were not suffered to live; [f] the soul that doeth ought presumptuously (whether it be born in the land or a stranger) the same reproacheth the Lord, and that soul shall be cut off from among his people: but after the Babylonish captivity, when the Jews could not fully execute their own laws, then began they first to separate men from the congregation for gross impieties,

The practice of the Jewish church herein.

e Archbishop Potter on Church-government. f Numb. xv. 30.

ieties, as they had done for legal impurities before. [g] In
bleſſed Saviour's time the puniſhment of excommunication
s very frequent; and according to the tradition and practice
he Jewiſh maſters, there were three kinds or degrees of it.
e firſt and loweſt was what they called Niddui, the Greeks
oriſmos, a ſeparation of great offenders from all civil and re-
ous commerce. The ſecond was what they called Cherem,
Greeks, *anathema*, or execration, becauſe over and above
aforeſaid ſeparation, there were in this form, certain curſes
of the law of Moſes pronounced over the head of the offen-
, to affect him more ſenſibly with the dread of divine ven-
nce. The third was what they called *Schammatha*, which
s a ſort of proſcription, whereby the ſinner, whom the former
thods did not reclaim, was for ever cut off from the people
God, his name razed out of the book of life, and himſelf con-
ned to deſtruction, and the coming of the Lord in judgment
ainſt him; for ſo the word meaneth.

WHETHER our Saviour, among other rites, might adopt this and of the
ewiſe into his religion, is not ſo material here to inquire; that chriſtian.
has eſtabliſhed a juriſdiction in his church, and given the rulers
ereof full power to take cognizance of its members, is evident
om this paſſage: [h] If thy brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go
ll him his fault between him and thee alone; if he ſhall hear
ee, thou haſt gained thy brother. But if he will not hear
ee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth
two or three witneſſes, every word may be eſtabliſhed, *i. e.*
at thou mayeſt be able, in caſe he does not then amend, to
roduce ſufficient teſtimony of his guilt before the church's tri-
nal: and if he ſhall neglect to hear them, *i. e.* to promiſe
mendment upon their admonition; take them along with thee,
nd tell it to the church, that ſo ſhe may examine the matter,
nd, upon thy proving his guilt by ſufficient witneſs, may autho-
tatively admoniſh him to amend: but if he neglect to hear the
hurch, let him be unto thee an Heathen Man, and a Publican,
e. give him over for a ſad and deſperate ſinner, as one, that
to be ejected from the communion of the church, and no
onger to enjoy the common benefits of a chriſtian: for I ſay
nto you, *i. e.* to you of the church, before whom this obſtinate
ffender is to be cited and accuſed, Whatſoever ye ſhall bind on
arth, ſhall be bound in heaven, and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe
n earth, ſhall be looſed in heaven. From which paſſage it ap-
ears that our Lord is here inſtructing his church to exerciſe a
udicial power over its members; for this is a manifeſt deſcrip-
ion of a judicial proceſs. He who has been injured, is firſt
irected to tell the offender of his fault privately between them-
elves; if that have no effect, to admoniſh him before witneſs;
this admonition likewiſe proves unſucceſsful, to complain to
the

[g] Comber on Excommunication. [h] Matth. xviii. 15, &c.

the church; if the church's interposition be not regarded, then follows the sentence, whereby the obstinate offender is separated from the communion of the faithful, and reduced into the state of heathens; which sentence Christ promises to confirm and ratify in heaven.

And as our Saviour gave his apostles a judicial power over the members of the church, so we find St Paul, in the case of the incestuous Corinthians, exercising it to the full. The Corinthians, as the apostle tells them, ought to have lamented for the great scandal which their offending brother had given to the enemies of religion, and for the danger to which he had exposed himself, and thereupon to have excluded him from their communion; but they having neglected this part of their duty, he himself proceeds to pass sentence on him; [i] I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed; in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

To attest the church's authority, in the earliest days of christianity, [k] God was pleased to permit Satan to torment those that were excommunicated with some great pain, or disease of body, both to deter others, and to bring the offender to a sense of his sin; which accordingly had effect upon this Corinthian; for in the second epistle which the apostle writes, he tells the church, that [l] sufficient to such an one is this punishment, which was inflicted of many, and therefore he directs them to comfort and forgive him, viz. by restoring him to their communion, lest he should be swallowed up with over-much sorrow, and lest Satan, by that means, should get advantage to destroy him, by tempting him to despair. As therefore he had before decreed him to be censured, in the name, and by the authority of Christ, so now he remits the censure, by the same authority; [m] to whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also; for if I forgive any thing, to whom I forgive it, for your sakes forgive I it, in the person of Christ. So that here is a full evidence of the apostle's employing his jurisdiction, both in censuring an offender, and upon his repentance, in remitting the censure; and therefore, when we find him in other places threatening the wicked, if they persisted in their evil courses, that he would come with a rod, and would not spare, but would use severity, and revenge all disobedience, and this, by the authority which the Lord had given him, to edification, and not to destruction; he very plainly declares that the power of excommunication

i 1 Cor. v. 3. &c. k Cave's Primitive Christianity. l 2 Cor. ii. 6, &c.
m Ibid. ver 10.

tion was in his hands, wherewith, as he tells us, he chaſtiſed menæus, and Alexander, two buſy heretics in the church of heſus, whom [n] he delivered unto Satan, that they might rn not to blaſpheme.

' But this method of proceeding, ſome may ſay, was pecu- liar to the apoſtles, and to continue no longer in the church than they lived. They had power to inflict diſeaſes, and even death itſelf upon offenders, and ſo could execute their own ſentences themſelves in ſuch a manner as would effectually be felt. But ſince this power is departed from the church, the bare ſentence is mere *brutum fulmen*, and of no uſe or ſignification at all." Now the pretence of the temrary duration of this authority in the church can be no more n a mere cavil, ſince government, in its own nature, is ually neceſſary at one time as at another, and cannot ſubſiſt thout a power of animadverting upon offenders. The priive church was three hundred years without the protection a civil magiſtrate: moſt of that time it was actually perſeted; for the remainder it was barely connived at; and the ldeſt emperors were at moſt but like Gallio, who was an ficer under one of the gentleſt of them, men that cared for ne of theſe things; and ſhall we ſay that the governors of e church could not exerciſe a power over its own members, hilſt it continued in this condition, when we ſee that St Paul rected both Timothy and Titus how they ſhould proceed in nſuring offenders? Or, becauſe men are not now ſtricken dead ith a word's ſpeaking like Ananias and Saphira; or blind, like e ſorcerer Elymas, nor afflicted with ſore diſeaſes like thoſe hom the apoſtles delivered over to Satan, ſhall we therefore nclude either that the church has no power, or that her cenres are of no avail? Three ſeveral times has our Saviour reated it, that the ſentence which is given by a proper officer bew, he will confirm and ratify in heaven; and if to be ſecluded om the prayers and ſacraments of the chriſtian church; if to e debarred all commerce and ſociety with thoſe for whom we ave the greateſt love and eſteem; to be reduced to the condition f heathens, and, without repentance, delivered over to eternal amnation, be a puniſhment of no terror, what can we imagine errible? So dreadful a ſenſe had the primitive chriſtians of his expulſion from all civil and religious communion, that when ny lay under the ſentence of it, [o] they conſtantly appeared in ll the formalities of ſorrow and mourning; in a ſordid and qualid habit, with a ſad countenance, and tears in their eyes, anding without the church-doors (for they were not ſuffered o enter) falling down upon their knees to the miniſter, and egging the prayers of all good chriſtians as they went in, with ll the expreſſions and demonſtrations of a dejected mind; reckoning

An objection.

Anſwered.

n 1 Tim. i. 20. o Cave's Primitive Chriſtianity.

reckoning the lower they lay in repentance, the higher it would exalt them, and the less they spared themselves, the more God would spare them.

And questionless, the severity of the primitive discipline was a powerful means, not only to make offenders themselves sensible of the heinousness of their crimes, but, by their exemplary punishment, to guard and terrify others from falling into the like condemnation; to stop the infection from spreading, by enjoining a separation from all notorious propagators of vice; and to provide for the credit of religion, by animadverting upon the disobedient and unruly, and setting a brand upon such as blasphemed the name of God, and brought scandal upon their holy profession. If this antient ordinance has in these our days lost its terror, and fallen into contempt, this must proceed from that male-administration of it, whereby it degenerates either into an useless or mischievous instrument: and therefore to retrieve its lost credit, it may not be improper to close up this subject with these important rules, viz. [z] that this ecclesiastical censure be impartial, without respect of persons, or inflicting it on one rather than another; that it be not exercised in secular affairs, which is a gross perverting of this sacred institution; that it be not inflicted for trifles, for disputable matters, but for such important causes as will justify so awful a sentence; that it be executed by a proper administrator, *i. e.* by a sacred person, a bishop or presbyter, and not by a lay-deputy, as is done too often; and lastly, that it be used with great gravity and seriousness, with great tenderness and charity; for, as it is a sacred institution, it is to be administred with a becoming solemnity and reverence; and, as it is a fatherly censure, must be discharged with a proportionable affection and concernedness for the welfare of offenders.

The perpetuity of Christ's church.

V. One part more of the commission, which our Saviour gave his disciples, was the promise which he made them and their successors, of the perpetuity of his church, and of his continual protecting and assisting them in all ages, [a] for lo, I am with you, even unto the end of the world: for it is impertinent to suppose that the *Synteletta tou aioonos* should mean no more than the end of the Jewish age or œconomy, which lasted only till the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem by Titus, as some would have it, on purpose to confine this promise to the persons of the apostles only; [b] whereas this phrase is never once in the whole Bible used in this sense, but very often, and even by this evangelist too, to denote the last consummation of all things. Since the apostles therefore all of them died within the compass of fourscore years after this promise was made, there is no other way wherein it could be fulfilled, but by our Lord's being

z Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. a Matth. xxviii. 20. b Archbishop Potter on Church-government.

ing with their ſucceſſors, in the goſpel-miniſtry, till the orld's end. So long then as the promiſe of God is true, hough many thouſands of profeſſors have abandoned the faith, nd apoſtatized from the church; though many particular urches have been loſt, and ſome bright and glorious candle-cks quite removed from their places; yet will not he permit e church in general to periſh, nor the gates of hell to prevail ainſt it. In all ages he will preſerve to himſelf a number of ue worſhippers, and in all exigences, raiſe up ſuch powerful efenders of his holy religion, as its moſt inveterate enemies all not be able to withſtand. And to ſatisfy ourſelves how far is promiſe is already verified, we will take a ſhort view of the veral dangers and viciſſitudes which chriſtianity has under-one, ſince its firſt ſetting foot in the world, in order to per-ive the watchfulneſs of God's providence and protection over it.

An hiſtorical account of the ſeveral dangers chriſtianity has been in, and of God's protecting it in all ages.

AFTER the apoſtles had, for ſome time, preached in Jeruſa-m, and the regions thereabout, the church-hiſtory acquaints that they went abroad to convert other nations, and took ch man his particular diſtrict; that Peter preached to the ews, diſperſed in Pontus, Galatia, Bythinia, Capadocia, &c. ndrew, to the Scythians; John, in Leſſer Aſia; Philip, in hrygia; Thomas, in Parthia, &c. inſomuch, that the antient ophecy was fulfilled, [d] God ſhall enlarge Japheth, and he ſhall well in the tents of Shem, *i. e.* the poſterity of the Gentiles all worſhip the true God, and be received into covenant with im.

1. From hereſy.

[e] But no ſooner did the chriſtian religion begin to appear the world, but ſeducers and heretics ſprang up in the church, ho might have endangered the common faith, had not God iſed up eminent men to withſtand and confute their errors. n theſe early times we read of ſome who held that the general ſurrection was paſt; and of others, who denied that Chriſt as come in the fleſh; of ſome, who maintained the difference meat, and the unlawfulneſs of marriage, and even ſuch opi-ions as might be called the Doctrines of Devils: but St Paul ood up and oppoſed them all. Simon Magus, whom the an-ents call the Ring-leader of all hereſy, denied the doctrine of e Trinity, and affirmed that himſelf was God; but St Peter, nd other noted champions, encountered and defeated him. rom him, however, proceeded a numerous offſpring of heretics, l differing from one another, as much as they did from truth; nd among theſe were Ebion and Cerinthus, who held that hriſt was a mere man, and that the obſervation of the Moſaic w was neceſſary; but as St Paul confuted the latter aſſertion, nd St John the former, ſo St Jude, the ſurvivor of all the poſtles, except St John, and now grown old in the profeſſion nd defence of the goſpel, animated the chriſtians, in thoſe times,

c Pearſon on the Creed. d Gen. ix. 27. e Edwards's Body of Divinity, ol. I.

to this juſt and glorious conflict; [f] when I gave all diligence, ſays he, to write to you of the common ſalvation, *i. e.* of the great and important cauſe of chriſtianity which concerns us all, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye ſhould earneſtly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the ſaints; which exhortation was ſo well obſerved, that [g] in ſucceeding ages, no ſooner did any hereſy ſhew its head, but it preſently met with a ſtrenuous oppoſition.

2. Perſecutions. THAT the chriſtian religion ſhould engage its followers in miſeries and ſufferings, is obvious to any that conſider the nature of its doctrine, and the tendency of its deſign. The ſeverity of its precepts, ſo directly oppoſite to the corrupt and vicious inclinations of men, the purity of its worſhip, ſo flatly contrary to the looſe and obſcene rites and ſolemnities of the heathens, and its abſolute inconſiſtency with thoſe religions that had ſo long obtained in the world, raiſed a general indignation againſt it, and provoked the great ones, in thoſe times, to conſpire its ruin. Ten bitter perſecutions were ſucceſſively raiſed againſt its profeſſors, in which all that the wit and malice of man could invent, by way of torture, was inflicted; and ſo far had the Roman emperors proceeded once, as appears by the trophies, and [h] triumphal arches erected to perpetuate the memory of their conqueſt over it, as to think they had quite extinguiſhed chriſtianity; but it ſtill revived, and grew afreſh. The cruelties of adverſaries increaſed the number of chriſtians, and the more they ſuffered, the more they flouriſhed; till at length an edict was publiſhed, in Conſtantine's time, giving liberty and encouragement to all chriſtians to worſhip God, according to their own manner.

3. Hereſies again. THUS had the church reſt from perſecution; but not long after, there aroſe heretical and falſe doctrines, which not only diſturbed

f Jude, ver. 3. g Thus, in the next centuries, Marcion and Valentine were attacked by Polycarp, St John's ſcholar; and Irenæus, Polycarp's diſciple, wrote againſt the hereſies of Simon Magus, Menander, Baſilides Carpocrates, &c. Tertullian encountered Marcion, Hermogines, and Apelles; and, when the doctrine of Ebion and Cerinthus was renewed by Sabellius, and Paulus Samoſatenus, theſe heretics were oppoſed by Gregory Neo-Cæſarea, and Dionyſius of Alexandria, and ſo of all the reſt. Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I.

h Two inſcriptions belonging to theſe triumphal arches were found in Clania in Spain, the one of which is thus:

DIOCLESIANUS JOVIUS, ET MAXIMIAN. HERCULEUS CAES. AUG. AMPLIFICATO PER ORIENTEM ET OCCIDENTEM IMP. ROM. ET NOMINI CHRISTIANORUM DELETO, QUI REMP. EVERTEBANT.

The other thus:

DIOCLESIAN. CAES. AUG. GALERIO IN ORIENTE ADOPT. SUPERSTITIONE CHRIST——UBIQUE DELETA, ET CULTI DEORUM PROPAGATO.

The meaning of both which is to ſhew that Dioclesian, and his colleague Maximianus had every where extinguiſhed the wicked ſuperſtition of Chriſt, as they called it, ſo pernicious to the commonwealth, and had reſtored Paganiſm, and the worſhip of the gods; Cave's Primitive Chriſtianity. But theſe very emperors, we are told, being tired and wearied out with perſecuting the church to no purpoſe, betook themſelves to a private ſtate, and ſpent the reſt of their lives in gardening.

diſturbed the peace, but impaired the purity of it. The Arian hereſy, which blaſphemed the ſacred Trinity, and denied the divinity of our bleſſed Saviour, ſoon after the general peace, broke out: but here the care of divine providence was very remarkable, in raiſing up able champions, ſuch as Athanaſius, Gregory Nyſſen, and Nazianzen, &c. to protect inſulted truth; and a ſufficient number of learned Apologiſts, both [i] of the Greek and Latin church, to defend it, when it was aſſaulted by Pagans.

Mahometiſm and idolatry.

WHILE matters were in this ſituation, a new ſtorm threatened very grievouſly the church of Chriſt, for Conſtantine the Great, having removed his army from the northern to the eaſtern territories, and himſelf from Rome to Conſtantinople, gave the Goths and Vandals, and other barbarous nations, an opportunity to invade Italy, and lay waſte the weſtern empire; while in the eaſt, the errors and hereſies, the quarrels and contentions, that prevailed among chriſtians, made way for Mahometiſm, and deſtroyed the moſt flouriſhing churches, even thoſe that are mentioned in the Revelation.

THUS while, in the eaſt, the world fell off to Mahometiſm, and in the weſt, to ſuperſtition and idolatry, the church, one would think, was in imminent danger: but how much ſoever it might ſuffer by theſe defections, it was ſtill preſerved from deſtruction. For, even in the ages of the greateſt corruption, [k] ſome generous ſouls always appeared, who abhorred the errors which then prevailed, and contended earneſtly for the faith which was once delivered to the ſaints, till, at length, their zeal and writings awakened others to inquire into the truth of things, and ſo meditate a reformation; which was both begun and continued with ſuch a ſeries of wonderful and ſurpriſing events, as proclaimed God to be the great author and director of it.

The reaſons of God's protecting it.

THUS, in all the revolutions that have happened, true religion has ever been preſerved: in all ſtorms and tempeſts, the church has rode ſecurely, and the gates of hell have not prevailed againſt it: and, if we inquire into the grounds and reaſons hereof, we ſhall find that the truth and faithfulneſs of God are concerned in the preſervation of it. For, when he tells us expreſsly, that he [l] will eſtabliſh it for ever, and that [m] no weapon, formed againſt it ſhall proſper; that [n] he hath ſet up a kingdom, which ſhall never be deſtroyed; that [o] he will reign over the houſe of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there ſhall be no

i Of the Greek church were Athenagoras, Tatianus, Theophilus, Antiochenus, Juſtin Martyr, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Euſebius, Athanaſius, Theodoret, and of the Latin, Tertullian, Arnobius Lactantius, Minutius Felix, Auguſtinus, &c. k When the popiſh corruptions ſeemed to overſpread the churches of Europe, God ſtirred up the Waldenſes, in France; Wickliff, in England; Huſs, in Bohemia, Zuinglius, in Helvetia; Luther, in Saxony; Calvin, in France; Knox, in Scotland, &c. who vigorouſly made oppoſition againſt the errors and evil practices of the Roman church. Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I.

l Pſal. xlviii. 8. m Iſa. liv. 17. n Dan. ii. 44. o Luke i. 33.

no end; when these, and such like promises do every where meet us, we cannot entertain the least doubt of the perpetual subsistence of God's church for the time to come, since his watchful care and providence over it has been so wonderfully conspicuous, for the ages that are past. Amidst the strangest occurrences and revolutions therefore, we may confide in this great truth, that God's church shall never fail. Say, that for a time, it is corrupted with error and heresy; say, that it is endangered by persecution and tyranny; say, that it is undermined by stratagem and policy; yet, it being the singular charge and care of heaven, it shall never be destroyed; and for this reason it is represented under the emblem of the woman in the revelation, [p] clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; who when she was persecuted by the dragon, had two wings of a great eagle given her, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Gifts and Graces of the HOLY GHOST.

The descent of the Holy Ghost

OUR blessed Saviour, being about to ascend into heaven, in order to take possession of his mediatorial kingdom, supports the drooping spirits of his disciples with a promise that he would send a Comforter to them, who should protect and assist them with his Almighty power, and enlighten their minds with his infinite wisdom and knowledge. [a] Be of good cheer, says he, for [b] I will not leave you comfortless, but will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever: only [c] tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye receive the promise from the Father, and be endowed with power from on high. Pursuant to this order, the apostles, after they had seen their Lord ascend into heaven, [d] returned to Jerusalem; and, continuing with one accord in prayer and supplication, were, no doubt, met together for this purpose, when on the day of [e] Pentecost, so called, because it was

[p] Rev. xii. 1, 14.

[a] John xvi. 33. [b] Ibid. xiv. 16. [c] Luke xxiv. 49. [d] Acts i. 12, 14. [e] Concerning the Pentecost, we read this ordinance [Levit. xxiii. 15, 16.] Ye shall count unto you, from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering, seven Sabbaths shall ye complete; even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath, shall ye number fifty days, and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord. Hence, from the seven weeks interval, this was called the Feast of Weeks, and was observed, in memory of the delivery of the law from Mount Sinai, just fifty days after the children of Israel had left Egypt. Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. III.

s the fiftieth day after the feaſt of the Paſſover, [f] ſuddenly re came a ſound from heaven, as of a ruſhing mighty wind, d it filled all the houſe where they were ſitting. And there peared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it ſat on each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy oſt, and began to ſpeak with other tongues, as the Spirit ve them utterance.

WHY our bleſſed Saviour did not, immediately after his enſion, ſend the Holy Ghoſt to ſupply his place, but left his ciples, for ſome time, in this diſconſolate condition, may in a eat meaſure be aſcribed to his deſign of exerciſing their faith, d preparing them for a more joyful reception of the heavenly t, when it came. [g] For, as to be ſhut up in darkneſs makes e light more pleaſant and welcome, when we come to enjoy it ain, ſo to have been, for ſome time, deſolate and deſtitute of r wonted comforts, makes the return of them, or the coming other comforts in their place, much more refreſhing and ſa- factory to us. The ten days, from the aſcenſion of our Lord the coming of this bleſſed Spirit, were, by the apoſtles, as e ſcripture ſeems to intimate, moſtly ſpent in prayer; by which ercife their expectations were raiſed, their deſires inflamed d heightened, their hearts opened and enlarged, and the va- e of the mercy prayed for wonderfully enhanced; and ſo, in reſpects, they were now better prepared to receive this vine gueſt, which the Father was to ſend in his name. But is is not all.

Why ten days after Chriſt's aſcenſion.

THE ſecond of thoſe three great ſolemnities, in which all the ales of Iſrael were required to appear before the Lord, in the ace which he ſhould chuſe, was now approaching; and there- re the divine wiſdom thought proper to delay the miſſion of e Comforter, until a large concourſe of people at Jeruſalem ight give a better opportunity for an event ſo extraordinary ore generally to be obſerved, more nicely examined, and more eedily publiſhed abroad, through the many diſtant regions whi- er the people, now aſſembled, would ſhortly be diſperſed. nd by this means likewiſe, thoſe very perſons, who at the ſt great feaſt of the Paſſover, had been eye-witneſſes of our viour's ſufferings and ſhame, would have now the ſame evidence his truth and glory, by thoſe powers of the Spirit conferred, d thoſe miracles wrought in his name, at their attendance on is ſecond feſtival, which would be an over-balance to the andal of his croſs.

BUT whatever the reaſons of the Holy Ghoſt's delay might , it is certain, that the appearances of his deſcent, when he me, were very ſurpriſing, and very inſtructive. The ſudden- ſs of the ſound, and the point of direction, whence he came, ere of uſe to ſtrike an awe upon the perſons, and prepare them,

The circumſtances of his deſcent, and the import of them.

f Acts ii. 2, &c. g Conant's Sermons.

them, with more profound humility and reverence, to receive the approaches God was making towards them. The resemblance of wind is, of all others, most familiar in scripture to figure the Spirit of God, his power, and his effects. Our Saviour himself makes use of the similitude: and indeed, what can be more proper to represent the freedom of divine grace, as well as the power of its operations, those refreshing, those cleansing influences, which fill and penetrate, and move the hearts of men, which raise a new and happy ferment there, and lift them up to heaven, by infusing pious dispositions, than wind, which like that Spirit, is itself invisible, wonderful, and unaccountable in its manner of working, but in its force and efficacy, notorious, and undeniable?

THE like propriety [h] some have observed in the emblem of cloven tongues, sitting on the heads of the disciples, in a bright resemblance of fire. The tongues might denote the readiness and aptness of their expressions and arguments; the clefts in the tongues, the diversity of the languages, they were to speak; and possibly the sitting of these tongues upon them, might signify the permanency of this gift; that it was not to vanish immediately, but allowed to continue, and by their ministry, to be diffused and communicated to others, so long as the necessities of the church, and the propagation of the christian faith should require it. Nor can it be imagined, but that fire was a very fit resemblance of the light, these disciples received by the accession of the Holy Spirit; of the clear, unerring knowledge, they attained of all things, that it concerned persons in their high character, and trust to understand; and of that zeal, and fearless courage, which spread itself into their hearts, and kindled such a vital and vigorous heat therein, that from thenceforth, we hear no more of any of them trembling at the charge of belonging to Jesus, no more assembling privately for fear of the Jews, but putting themselves forward, industriously preaching and working miracles boldly in the temple, in the synagogues, in the streets; declaring, that they must, and would speak what they had seen and heard; and when treated as malefactors, upon this very account, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for the sake of a crucified Master.

The descent itself, what.

THESE are the observations which some have thought fit to make concerning the circumstances attending the Holy Ghost's descent: but by the descent itself, we must not apprehend any local motion, or mutation of place: for since, as we had occasion to prove elsewhere, the Holy Ghost is a divine person, and consequently, every where present, it cannot be properly said to remove or to go from one place to another; for then must it come to a place, where it was not before, which would destroy

[h] Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. III. and Tillotson's Sermons Vol. III.

omnipreſence; and therefore the deſcent muſt be interpreted ly of the efficacious preſence of that bleſſed Spirit, or rather, the diſcovery and manifeſtation of that preſence, by ſome ange effects, and uncommon operations.

The different ſorts of gifts, what.

Now the operations aſcribed to this Spirit are, ſome extraordnary, ſome ordinary; [i] ſome ſpecial to ſome times and ſome erſons, others common to all chriſtians in all ages; ſome neceſſary r the firſt planting of the goſpel, others requiſite to the ſpirial growth of true believers; ſome miraculous gifts, by which oſe that were furniſhed with them were qualified to promote e ſalvation of other men; others, ſaving graces, by which oſe who are endued therewith are enabled to work out their wn ſalvation: the former, ſuch as we ought to thank God for aving heretofore beſtowed on the apoſtles, and firſt preachers the goſpel, for the more effectual and ſpeedy propagation ereof; the latter, ſuch as we ought to pray to God to beſtow pon ourſelves, as neceſſary to diſpoſe our underſtandings rightly apprehend, our wills chearfully to obey, and our affections ly to entertain the ſaving truths and precepts of the goſpel. he former not to be pretended to, in theſe our days, without nthuſiaſm and fanaticiſm; the latter not to be neglected, want-, or uncultivated by us, without hazard of our everlaſting lvation: the former, ſigns, whereby to diſtinguiſh true proets from falſe perſons, men really commiſſioned by God, from rogant pretenders to divine revelation; the latter, ſure chaacters, whereby to diſtinguiſh the regenerate from the unreenerate; the ſincere chriſtian from the hypocrite; the real eliever from the nominal; the ſpiritual perſon from the carnal; e child of God, and heir of glory, from the child of wrath, and n of perdition. And therefore, in treating of this argument, ur buſineſs muſt be,

I. To obſerve what theſe extraordinary gifts of the Holy hoſt were; and how highly neceſſary, at that time, for the rſt plantation of chriſtianity. And,

II. WHAT his ordinary operations are, how highly neceſſary, at this time, to enable us to perform the conditions of the oſpel; and in what manner we may moſt reaſonably ſuppoſe at they aſſiſt us herein.

The extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt

I. THE apoſtles then, we muſt imagine, and others entruſted ith the great affair of converting the world to the chriſtian relion, ſtood in need of many gifts which were not ſo neceſſary in fure ages. As [i] they were to be the firſt planters of the goſpel, it as requiſite, 1. That they ſhould be able to ſpeak the ſeveral lanuages of the nations to whom they were to preach. 2. That ey ſhould be fully and clearly inſtructed in the doctrines they ere to teach. 3. That they ſhould be able to give the moſt conincing evidence of the truth and divinity of their doctrines. And,

i Smalridge's Sermons. 1 Scott's Mediator.

And, 4. That they ſhould be conducted by infallible advice through all the emergent difficulties of their miniſtry: againſt all which neceſſities the Holy Ghoſt abundantly ſupplied them. For,

Of languages. 1. He inſpired them with the gift of tongues, without which they muſt have ſpent a great part of their lives before they could have been capable of preaching the goſpel to the world, in learning the ſeveral languages of the ſeveral nations they were to preach to. The Holy Ghoſt therefore, upon his miraculous deſcent, did, in an inſtant, infuſe into them the habit of ſpeaking ſeveral languages, inſomuch that, without any rules or previous inſtruction, they were heard to ſpeak, to the great aſtoniſhment of their hearers, in the [m] fifteen ſeveral tongues of fifteen ſeveral nations; and though it was not long before they were diſperſed abroad in the world, and ſome of them into remote countries, whoſe names perhaps they had never heard of before, yet wherever they came, they were inſtantly inſpired with the language of the country, and ſpake it as freely as if it had been their mother-tongue.

Of knowledge. 2. What the firſt preachers of the goſpel taught, was to be the ſtandard of truth and falſehood to all ſucceeding generations; and therefore the Holy Ghoſt took care to inſtruct them perfectly in all points of doctrine, that ſo their ſucceſſors, in all ages, might ſafely rely on their authority. And to this purpoſe, he not only converſed with their ſpirits, and repreſented things nakedly and immediately to their underſtanding, but raiſed their underſtanding likewiſe to comprehend his revelations; for ſo we are told, that upon their reception of the Holy Ghoſt, they [n] ſpake with tongues and propheſied, *i. e.* explained the deep myſteries of the goſpel.

Of miracles. 3. Becauſe it was requiſite, [o] that thoſe who offered a new religion to the world, ſhould have it in their power to convince others that their commiſſion was from heaven; God was pleaſed, by this miſſion of his Spirit, to endow them with a power of working miracles for the confirmation of their doctrine: and in this reſpect, they even excelled the works of Chriſt himſelf, to the full accompliſhment of his promiſe; [p] Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do ſhall he do alſo; and greater works than theſe ſhall he do, becauſe I go to the Father. For whereas before, the greateſt part of the miraculous ſigns of the divinity of the chriſtian doctrine were performed by Chriſt himſelf, and conſequently, confined to the place where he happened to be; the Holy Ghoſt, by impowering ſo many perſons in ſo many different parts, to perform ſo many wonderful things in Chriſt's name, did, as it were, carry him in triumph through the world, and, at once, diſplay his majeſty, and power over the face of the whole earth.

Of wiſdom. 4. Becauſe the work, wherein the firſt propagators

m Acts ii. 4, &c. n Ibid. xix. 6. o Scott's Mediator. p John xiv. 12.

tors of the goſpel were engaged, was ſuch, as had difficulties tending it inſuperable to human prudence and wiſdom, ſuch as equired an invincible courage, and firm integrity of mind, a atchful prudence, and ſpotleſs purity of manners; under all heſe exigencies, the Holy Ghoſt ſerved the primitive church in he ſame capacity as the Urim and Thummim did the antient ews, *i. e.* as an oracle, to adviſe them in all caſes of difficulty, hat they were to ſay and do; for ſo our bleſſed Saviour ſeems o promiſe, [q] when they bring you before magiſtrates, take no hought what ye ſhall anſwer; for the Holy Ghoſt ſhall teach ou, at the ſame hour, what ye ought to ſay.

THESE were the aſſiſtances which the Spirit of God extended o the apoſtles and other planters of the chriſtian faith, without hich the great affair of converting the world muſt, in all pro- ability, have proved abortive. Had the chriſtian religion in- eed, like the Jewiſh, been intended for one nation only, [r] a di- erſity of languages had been of no farther uſe, than any other vidence of the Spirit, whereby the truth and miſſion of the poſtles were confirmed: but ſince the deſign of this religion as to be univerſal, the firſt ſtep to make it ſo muſt, in reaſon, e, to qualify the propagators of it to converſe with all nations. ow the capacity of talking clearly, though but in one, or a ery few ſtrange languages, is an attainment that coſts much ime and pains, even to the moſt acute parts, and unwearied pplication: and therefore, without the gift of languages, the onverſion of foreigners muſt have been a tedious, if not im- oſſible work, to ſuch undertakers as the apoſtles were, and hoſe commiſſion extended to every nation and language under eaven.

The neceſſity of theſe gifts to the firſt chriſtians.

Of languages.

'BUT put the caſe, they could have acquired a readineſs of xpreſſing themſelves by their own induſtry, this might indeed rocure them applauſe and high eſteem, but what is eſteem and pplauſe towards prevailing with men to embrace new doctrines, nd myſterious truths; to root out inveterate and agreeable orruptions; and to plant mortification, ſevere virtue, and ſelf- enial, in their ſtead? No authority, leſs than divine, is ſuffi- ient to perſuade ſuch a change: no faculty, attained by human ethods, can prove a divine authority: but when clear evi- ence is made of this in one inſtance, no difficulty will be found n believing it in others. Allowing therefore, that the apoſtles pake with other tongues, by divine inſpiration, the natural onſequence of this would be, that the matter ſpoken of was of he ſame original; it being inconceivable how God would be t the expence of a miracle, to furniſh men with words to ex- reſs any doctrine which was not of his own dictating.

q Luke xii. 11, 12. r Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels, Vol. III. s Col- er's Sermons.

Of knowledge.

THAT the apoſtles, as well as the reſt of the Jews, were under many miſtakes in matters of religion, is plain from ſeveral places of ſcripture, where we find them ignorant of the prophecies concerning the Meſſias, and never once imagining that he was to ſuffer death upon the croſs. This ſhocking circumſtance, happening to our Saviour ſo contrary to their expectations, made them almoſt deſpair of any deliverance from him: "We truſted, ſay they, that it had been he who ſhould have delivered Iſrael; which is as much as to ſay, that they deſpaired of it now. We have frequently taken notice from whence this miſapprehenſion of theirs proceeded, viz. from an opinion generally received among the Jews, that the Meſſias was to be a temporal prince, who was to deliver them from the Roman ſervitude, and make them a more glorious and triumphant nation than ever they had been. The private appearance, however, of our Saviour's life, and the ignominy of his death, one would think, might have rectified this notion, and fully ſatisfied them that his kingdom was not of this world: but this flattering expectation of ſecular greatneſs was ſo agreeable to fleſh and blood, this prejudice was ſo ſtrongly fixed, by being generally received, that it continued with them even after our Saviour's reſurrection, as we ſee by the queſtion they put to him, "Lord, wilt thou at this time reſtore again the kingdom to Iſrael? So that there was a plain neceſſity upon their Lords removal, for the miſſion of another teacher, to rectify the miſtakes they lay under concerning the nature of Chriſt's kingdom; to give them right apprehenſions of what they were to preach; and to inform them more fully in what were the myſteries and ſecrets of our holy religion.

Of courage

AND as the aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit was neceſſary to enlighten the minds of the apoſtles and firſt preachers of the goſpel; ſo was it no leſs neceſſary to fortify their hearts, and make them act with conſtancy and reſolution. For how much undauntedneſs ſoever we may imagine a righteous cauſe may give, yet there is ſufficient reaſon to think that the apoſtles, and firſt planters of chriſtianity would not have had courage enough to go on in their undertaking, had they not been ſupported by the miraculous workings and conſolations of the Holy Spirit. They were men inconſiderable both in fortune and intereſt: they never acted in public ſtations, and were therefore unpractiſed in that addreſs and graceful application which gives aſſurance, and gains reſpect. They had no ſubtlety of reaſoning, nor flouriſhes of rhetoric to ſet off their defence: their defence too was of ſuch a nature, that they could not prove themſelves innocent, without making their judges guilty, of the moſt horrid murder: yet all theſe diſadvantages did not, in the leaſt, diſcourage them from maintaining their cauſe, and purſuing their deſign. For, upon

t Luke xxiv. 21. u Acts i. 6.

pon the Holy Ghoſt's deſcent, * when they were made expe-
mentally ſenſible of its divine influence, when they perceived
eir minds enriched with a new ſtock of unſtudied and ſuper-
tural knowledge, and their tongues able to expreſs it in all
e languages they converſed with, we ſoon find them quitting
eir retirement, frequenting the moſt public places, and ſpeak-
g plainly in defence of their doctrine. It is ſtrange to obſerve
ith what a generous aſſurance they behaved when they were
mmoned before perſons of the greateſt quality, and the higheſt
uthority; with what freedom they pleaded their Maſter's in-
ocence, and proclaimed his honour; with what undauntedneſs
ey charged the court with the blood of the greateſt and moſt
ighteous perſon; with what unconcern, in ſhort, they expoſed
emſelves, and with what bravery they ſuffered.

NEITHER were they remarkable only for the reſolution they expreſſed upon all occaſions, but for the miraculous works they exhibited to the world, and which were highly neceſſary for the firſt eſtabliſhing of a religion that was to oppoſe the vices, and encounter the prevailing prejudices of the age. The religion of the Jews and Gentiles was in preſent poſſeſſion, had preſcription on their ſide, and, over and above that, gave a much greater freedom than the chriſtian. The heathen nations had antiquity and authority, the protection of the ſtate and oracular reſponſes to plead for their errors, and, what is of no ſmall weight, had ſtrong inclinations to wiſh them true: ſo that the reaſoning of the apoſtles would have hardly convinced their hearers; the world would never have believed that ſuch unpromiſing perſons were the ambaſſadors of heaven, had they produced no other argument but their own teſtimony: but, when they were heard to ſpeak with tongues they never learned; when they could cure diſeaſes, or inflict them; kill, or make alive, as they thought fit; when, in ſhort, they ſeemed to have the power of life and death delivered into their hands, and to carry a kind of omnipotence about them; this muſt needs draw the eyes of the people, and awaken in them a ſerious attention to what was delivered. They could not but conclude (as we obſerved before) that the doctrine muſt have no vulgar meaning which was ſo wonderfully atteſted; and that thoſe truths muſt be of more than ordinary concern, which ſtood recommended by ſo viſible a countenance of a divine power.

Of miracles

How long theſe ſeveral gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, viz. * the gift of divers kinds of tongues, and their interpretation; the gift of prophecy, and diſcerning of ſpirits; the gift of healing, and working miracles; and the gift of wiſdom and knowledge, as the apoſtle enumerates them, continued in the chriſtian church, is not ſo eaſy a matter to determine: this however we may reaſonably conjecture, y that the gift of tongues continued until the

The time of their continuance in the church.

* Collier's Sermons. x 1 Cor. xii. 8. y Scott's Mediator.

the gospel was so far established, that each country had natives of their own ordained to the work of the ministry, and capable of teaching others in their mother-tongue: that the gift of prophecy was not withdrawn till the whole New Testament was revealed, and the several parts of it collected into one volume: that the gift of wisdom or direction remained till the government of the church was every where settled, and its affairs reduced to a stated course and method: and lastly, that the gift of miracles, and among them, of ejecting evil spirits, abode in the church till the frauds and impostures of the idol-gods were discovered, and the heathen had received sufficient conviction of the falsity of their own, and the truth of the christian religion: at least, till the prejudices of education being worn off, the christian religion stood upon equal terms with the heathen; under which situation, its own natural force could not fail of turning the balance, and giving it an advantage.

But here we are not to suppose, because the miraculous powers of the Holy Ghost have long since ceased, that therefore he hath totally withdrawn himself from the church of Christ. He has recalled indeed the more visible signs of his presence, but still he continues the same influence, as certainly, though not as sensibly, as before: for it is by him that our Saviour promises [z] to be with us to the end of the world, and for that reason calls him [a] the other Comforter, who is to abide with us for ever. Which leads us to consider,

That the Holy Ghost is communicated now.

II. The ordinary operations of God's blessed Spirit, which the schools call Graces. That there is a sanctifying principle communicated to believers, preparing and assisting them to the fruits of holiness, and therefore called [b] the Seed of God; that this principle is more than all moral endowments, or any improvements of nature, that are merely human, and therefore called [c] the Gift of God; [d] that this is more than the objective influence of revealed truths, or of all the outward actings of providence, and therefore called the Gift within us; that this principle is wrought in us by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and therefore all virtues are called [e] the Fruits and Works of the Spirit, and christians, [f] the Temples of the Holy Ghost, and [g] an holy Habitation to God through his Spirit; these are truths that will appear, to any indifferent enquirer, as plain and evident, as any that are recorded in the Bible. In the Old Testament indeed, though there be not that express declaration of this inward assisting principle, proceeding from God, and co-operating in man's sanctification; yet, when we find Moses telling the Israelites, that [h] the Lord their God would circumcise their heart, and the heart of their seed, to love the Lord their God, with

z Matth. xxviii. 20. a John xiv. 16. b 1 John iii. 9. c 2 Tim. i. 6.
d Young's Sermons, Vol. II. e Gal. v. 22. f 1 Cor. vi. 19. g Eph. ii. 22.
h Deut. xxx. 6.

n all their ſoul; when we find David making his ſupplications God, [i] to open and turn his eyes, to unite and incline his rt, to quicken him, to make him go, to guide, and lead him, create a clean heart, and renew a right ſpirit within him; en we find Jeremiah, promiſing from God, that he would t his law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, hat they ſhould all know him, from the leaſt of them unto greateſt; and Ezekiel, giving us this aſſurance, [m] I will take ay the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you an rt of fleſh, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe to walk in my ſtatutes, and ye ſhall keep my judgments, and them; we cannot but ſuppoſe, that the doctrine of grace, ſting men to goodneſs, was generally received among the y men of old.

A GREAT deal, we acknowledge, of our Saviour's [n] diſcourſe ncerning the Spirit, which he was to pour on his diſciples, oes certainly belong to that extraordinary effuſion at Pente- t, and to thoſe wonderful effects, which were thereupon to low; yet, as he had formerly given this, as an encouragement all men to pray, that [p] his heavenly Father would give this ly Spirit to every one that aſked him; ſo there are many ts of that diſcourſe, ſuch as relate to the guidance, the con- tion, and the comforts of that Spirit, which ſeem to belong to conſtant neceſſities of all chriſtians. St Peter, on the day Pentecoſt, having converted a great number to the chriſtian h, ordered them to be baptized, and gave them aſſurance, t they ſhould receive the gift of the Holy Ghoſt; by which means, the ſtanding and ordinary influence of that Spirit; or the promiſe, ſays he, is to you, and to your children, and all that are afar off, all ſucceeding generations, at what diſtance ver, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call. What guage St Paul in his epiſtles ſpeaks, it is needleſs to recite, en in every page we find him declaring, that our under- ndings are enlightened, our wills conducted, our affections ciplined, and all by the miniſtry of this divine principle; that f ourſelves we can do nothing, but [s] are led by the Spirit; hrough him are ſtrengthened with might in the inward man; y him are ſealed unto the day of redemption; and, in one t to compriſe the ſenſe of many, * are waſhed, and ſanctified, d juſtified, in the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and by the irit of our God.

WE acknowledge indeed, that there is an obſcurity ſitting on the face of this diſpenſation of grace. We cannot feel the preſſions, nor trace the footſteps of its diſtinct working in us. e meaſures of our proficiency in goodneſs ſeem to depend intirely

The imperceptibleneſs of his working no objection.

[i] Pſal. cxix. 18, 25, 32, 35, 36. [k] Ibid. li. 10. [l] Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. [n] John xiv. [o] Burnet on the Articles. [p] Luke xi. 13. cts ii 38, 39. [r] 2 Cor. iii. 5. [s] Rom. viii. 14. [t] Eph. iii. 16. [u] Eph. 30. * 1 Cor. vi. 11.

intirely upon thoſe of our own diligence; and God requires as much diligence of us, as if he gave us no grace at all. But then we are to conſider, that there is the ſame obſcurity upon every diſpenſation of God's temporal providence, that there is upon this. † They, who will not allow, that God affords us his Spirit to aſſiſt us in the work of our ſanctification, do nevertheleſs allow, that he gives us all the temporal good things we ſtand in need of: but how, in the mean while, does this appear, more than the other? for, when God intends to bleſs a man with riches, he does not open the windows of heaven, and pour them into his treaſure; he does not enrich him with ſuch a diſtinguiſhing providence, as that wherewith he watered Gideon's fleece, when all the earth round it was dry: but he endues ſuch a man with diligence and frugality, or elſe adorns him with ſuch acceptacle qualifications, as may recommend him to the opportunities of advancement: and thus his riſe to fortune is made purely natural, and the diſtinct operations of God in it do not at all appear. And, in like manner, when God does, by the inward aſſiſtance of his grace, promote a man to goodneſs, he does not thereupon ſuddenly change the whole frame of his temper, chain up all the movements of his natural affections, and infuſe into him ſuch a ſyſtem of virtuous habits, as may make him good without any pains or application; but he works his ſpiritual work by a gradual proceſs; inſtilling into ſuch a man, firſt a conſidering mind, then a ſober reſolution, and then a diligent uſe of all ſuch moral means, as conduce to the forming and perfecting of every particular virtue. And now, while God, in theſe, and ſuch like inſtances, does work in an human and ordinary way, never ſuperſeding the power of nature, but only moving and directing, and aſſiſting her, where ſhe is weak, his grace is like a little ſpring, covered with a great wheel; though it does all, yet it is not commonly ſeen to do any thing; and man, when he pleaſes to be vain and ungrateful, may impute all to his own power and application; but with as good reaſon may he aſcribe all the other bleſſings of God's ordinary providence to his own ſkill and acquiſition.

Nor our ignorance of its manner.

WE acknowledge again, that there is another obſcurity upon the face of his diſpenſation. × We know not the philoſophy of ſanctifying grace, nor can we tell, when, or how long, or in what manner it operates upon our minds. This is a ſpeculation, that our Saviour himſelf argues us ignorant of, as ignorant as we are of the iſſues and retreats of the wind; and yet he thought fit to leave us ſo, whether the knowledge of it were too excellent for us, or whether it were too uſeleſs: but this hinders not, but that we may be ſure there is ſuch a principle in us, as ſure as we are, that there is ſuch a meteor as the wind, when we hear it blow, though we cannot tell whence it cometh, or whither

† Young's Sermons, Vol. II. × Young, ibid.

ither it goeth. Our Saviour here takes it for granted, [y] that noiſe and ſound is proof ſufficient that the wind blows; the king and rattling of boughs, tearing up trees, and rocking of nſes, all convince us, that the air is in a violent agitation; yet we are not privy to the firſt beginnings of it: we cannot what raiſed this mighty ferment, nor where it ſet out, nor w far it intends, nor what becomes of it, when it ceaſes. d, in like manner, [z] though we pretend not to declare, but nkfully to admire, by what ray the Divine Spirit opens, and nes in upon our underſtanding; by what motion it inſpires od thoughts, and ſuggeſts holy reſolutions; by what welcome lence it draws our wills, ſteers our appetites, and checks our ſions; by what diſcipline it extinguiſhes ſinful imaginations, l looſe deſires; by what heat it kindles love, and deſire, and arfulneſs of endeavours; by what power it awes the devil, l foils temptations, and removes impediments, and ſtrengthens l exhilerates amidſt all difficulties; and finally, by what patient it turns, and moulds, and transforms our ſtubborn nature o new notions, new ſavours, new powers, new acts, new aims, w joys, as if we were intirely new creatures, and deſcended m another race: though we pretend not to comprehend, I , the manifold effects of this [a] unſpeakable gift; though we dily acknowledge, that it is a gift ſurpaſſing our apprehen-n, as much as it does our deſerts; yet the man muſt be a anger to his own compoſition, as well as the power of God at made him, who pretends to call in queſtion the reality of e thing, becauſe of its abſtruſeneſs. Our own ſoul, we know ry well, moves, and yet we do not feel it by any impulſe, that kes a ſenſible impreſſion upon our outward ſtructure, nor n we ſay, how this motion is conveyed from an immaterial the fineſt corporeal ſubſtance; how that commands ſo power-lly, and every part of this obeys ſo readily. And ſurely then, , who created ſoul and body both, and found out a way to ve matter by that which is not matter, cannot want a method making his Spirit correſpond with ours, the ſpirit creat-g with that created by it, no, nor of carrying on this cor-ſpondence in ſo eaſy and familiar a manner, that we ourſelves all not be able to diſcern diſtinctly, whence this wind cometh, whither it goeth.

That the Holy Ghoſt operates upon our minds.

IT muſt be allowed, that though the devil cannot lay us under a neceſſity to do wickedly, [b] yet he is frequently repreſented ſcripture, as tempting us to ſin; which he can only do immediately, by raiſing ſuch ideas in our brain, as may move, and ſpoſe us to engage in ſomething that is criminal. To this purpoſe he is ſaid [c] to work in the children of diſobedience, and to lead them captive, *eis to ekeinou thelyma*, to do his will. Now the

y Stanhope's Sermons on ſeveral occaſions. z Young's Sermons, Vol. II. 2 Cor. ix. 15. b Whitby's Appendix on 2 Cor. vi. c Eph. ii. 2. d 2 Tim. ii. 26.

the ſame ſcripture that acquaints us with this, tells us likewiſe for our comfort, that • ſtronger is he that is in us, than he that is in the world, *i. e.* that the good ſpirit, which dwells in pious men, is more powerful in them, than Satan is in the wicked: and therefore, when Satan is repreſented as [f] a lying ſpirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophet, as [g] moving David to number the people, as [h] entring into Judas, and [i] filling the heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Ghoſt; as theſe expreſſions cannot be accounted for, without allowing him a power to work upon the ſpirits of thoſe men; ſo, on the other hand, when God is ſaid to [k] create in us a clean heart, and to renew a right ſpirit within us, &c. if he, by the Spirit, raiſes no good motions and ideas in us; if he vouchſafes us no inward illuminations, by attending to which, we may diſcern the wondrous things of his law; we can hardly conceive what the meaning of theſe words can be: nay, how can his Spirit be ſaid [l] to help our infirmities, [m] to purify our hearts, to be unto us a Comforter, a [n] Spirit of ſanctification, and [o] of power, and of a ſound mind; how can he, I ſay, be all, or any of theſe things to us, how can he do all or any of theſe things for us, unleſs he works ſomething in us? for ſince conſolation ariſes only from the inward teſtimony of the conſcience; ſince ſanctification conſiſts in the renewing of the inward man, and hath the ſoul for its ſubject; and ſince the heart is purified by inward change and temper, which render it averſe to ſin, and ſet the deſires and inclinations of the ſoul againſt it, either the Spirit muſt operate upon the mind of man with ſome kind of energy, or theſe effects would never follow.

In all ages. To ſay that theſe things and expreſſions concern only the times, in which the extraordinary gifts and operations of the Holy Spirit were vouchſafed, is to make future ages, ſince the ceaſing of theſe gifts, deſpair of being comforted, or ſanctified, or even enabled to purify their heart; and, conſequently, to deſpair of being now the ſons of God, united to Chriſt Jeſus, or poſſeſſed of any of the fruits of the Spirit. [p] In the primitive times, the Spirit of God was needful [q] to ſtrengthen Chriſt's ſervants in the inward man, to comfort them under tribulations, to ſupport them under fiery trials, and to preſerve them, both from the ſubtilties of Satan, and the temptations of the world: in our days, there is the ſame need of his gracious aſſiſtance for the like purpoſes, therefore the like reaſon to expect it; for, as God is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever, there is in him, and ever will be, the ſame benignity of temper now, as there was in all former ages, and the ſame good will and readineſs of mind to give his Holy Spirit to thoſe that aſk, in order 1. to illuminate their underſtandings; 2. to ſanctify their wills; 3. to excite

The ordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt.

e 1 John iv. 4. f 1 Kings xxii. 21. g 1 Chron. xxi. 1. h Luke xxii. 3.
i Acts v. 3. k Pſal. li. 10. l Rom. viii. 26. m 1 Pet. i. 22. n 1 Cor. vi. 11.
o 2 Tim. i. 7. p Whitby's Appendix on 2 Cor. vi. q Eph. iii. 16.

cite them in the ways of godlineſs; 4. to comfort them under fficulties; and 5. to enable them to pray with devout and fer-nt affections; which are the ordinary operations of this bleſſed ent upon mens minds.

1. One office and gift of the Holy Spirit is, to enlighten our minds that we may ſee the great myſteries of chriſtianity, and at we may underſtand our duty aright. For being not only norant by nature, and inattentive to divine truths, but pre-ſſeſſed likewiſe with paſſions and prejudices which obſtruct r reception of them; we ſhould hardly attain to a competent nſe of what concerns our eternal ſtate, without the aſſiſtance this divine inſtructor: and therefore we find the apoſtle aking this the ſubſtance of his prayer for the Epheſians, [r] That e God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory, might ve unto them the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation, in the know-dge of him; and that the eyes of their underſtanding being lightened, they might know what is the hope of his calling, d what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the ſaints. r the excellency of this heavenly teacher is,——That he t only removes thoſe falſe notions and perſuaſions which pre-ude conviction, and thoſe unruly paſſions and affections which rken the mind, but opens, as it were, the eye of the ſoul to in the glorious light of the goſpel, and by it to diſcern the ue nature of divine objects. When this is done, he makes oice of the beſt and moſt convincing arguments, and enforces eſe with the ſtrongeſt and moſt prevailing motives; motives, at are fetched from the other world, as well as this, and have e terrors of the Lord, as well as the hope of their calling in eir hand. [s] By this means he diſpoſes mens minds to conſi-r, and think a long time of ſuch a doctrine, ſuch a reproof, ch an exhortation. He urges the thing upon them, and will t ſuffer them to baniſh it from their thoughts; ſo that, at ngth, it comes to be firmly impreſſed in their ſouls, and rivet-in their heart and conſcience: and what gives this divine ſtructor an advantage above all human eloquence and me-ods of perſuaſion is, that as he is no ſtranger to their ſecret nditions, but better acquainted with the inmoſt receſſes of their arts, than they themſelves are; ſo he can adapt his convictions them, and order and methodize them according to the parti-lar temper and complexion of their ſouls; and hence no doubt is, that he hath brought, in all ages, ſo many diſſolute livers a ſight of their errors, and remorſe for them. The ſword the Spirit has been ſo happily directed by his Almighty in-ence and operation, that, to ſpeak in the apoſtle's moſt ex-eſſive language, [t] it hath pierced, to the dividing aſunder of l and ſpirit, and of the joints and marrow, and ſo hath be-me a diſcerner of the thoughts, and intents of the heart, rifling

Illumination.

[r] Eph. i. 17, 18. [s] Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. [t] Heb. iv. 12.

the ſinner's conſcience, and ranſacking all the privacies of his ſoul, diſturbing his ſecurity, and powerfully captivating him into the embraces of the truth.

Sanctification. 2. ANOTHER of theſe ordinary operations of the ſpirit is ſanctification, which conſiſts in purifying our wills and affections from thoſe wicked and inordinate luſts, which ſet us at enmity with God. For though our religion furniſhes us with ſuch motives as are infinitely ſufficient to perſuade us; and though our minds and wills are not ſo depraved, but that we are ſtill capable to conſider, and free to follow thoſe motives; yet ſo vain and deſultory are our minds as to all ſerious and ſpiritual thoughts, and ſo averſe and inflexible are our wills as to the ſpiritual and difficult duties, which theſe motives perſuade; that did not the Holy Ghoſt frequently impreſs them on our minds, and urge and apply them to our wills and affections, we ſhould never, of ourſelves, ſo thoroughly conſider them, as to be conquered and perſuaded by them. It is with very good reaſon therefore, that the holy ſcriptures have aſcribed the work of [u] our ſanctification, and [*] renovation of our mind to the efficacy of this bleſſed Spirit; ſince he not only mollifies our hearts, and bends our ſtubborn wills to a compliance with the divine precepts; but, by his ſecret inſinuations, is continually exciting ſuch deſires and affections in us, as both exalt and purify our nature. [x] He excites our love to God, and to all that is truly worthy of that noble paſſion, and ſtirs up our hatred to every thing that is contrary to the purity of his nature. He enlarges our hearts with joy and gladneſs, while we are ſerving our Maker, but filleth our ſouls with grief and bitterneſs, whenever we tranſgreſs his laws. He raiſes in us a fear of offending the Divine Majeſty, but makes us fearleſs and undaunted in the diſcharge of our duty, or in ſuffering for righteouſneſs ſake. He kindles in us an holy anger and indignation againſt ſin, eſpecially if it be of an heinous nature; and, at the ſame time, inſpires us with an even and calm temper, which enables us to live peaceably with all men; for [y] the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, meekneſs, &c.

Excitation. 3. ANOTHER ſtanding office of the bleſſed Spirit, is to quicken and aſſiſt us in the duties of religion. For [z] though it may appear from the lives both of heathens and hypocrites, that all men may advance farther in a ſtate of virtue, by the bare conduct of civil prudence, and the force of ſuch reſolutions, as are merely human, than moſt chriſtians do attain, amidſt the great, but neglected advantages of divine grace; yet, when we conſider, that religion is not ſatisfied with many good acts, no, nor with many good habits, but only with an integrity of goodneſs, and an equal reſpect to all that is commanded: when we conſider, how

u 1 Cor. vi. 11. * Tit. iii. 5. x Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I.
y Gal. v. 22. z Young's Sermons, Vol. I.

y hardly reconciled our underſtandings are to the principal
ies of chriſtianity, I mean the duties of the croſs, and, under
notion of their being cruel, or needleſs, or indiſcreet, are
to ſhift off their obligation: when we conſider, how difficult
for our weak unſteady ſouls to refine themſelves in ſuch a
h, as to love God above all thoſe idols, after which we natu-
y go aſtray from the womb; and yet, without ſuch a love,
have no principle in us that can either ſupport, or recom-
nd our ſervices: when we conſider all theſe difficulties, the
at taſk before us, the great indiſpoſitions within us, the avo-
ons, ſeductions, ſnares, and violences, that are always ready
divert us from the work; we muſt confeſs, that they are diffi-
ies purely inſuperable by our own ſtrength, and muſt there-
e require ſome ſupernatural principle to aſſiſt us in the per-
mance of them. [a] And this, in ſome meaſure, God may be
l to do, either by admoniſhing, and putting us in mind of our
y, which, in the crowd and hurry of our worldly occaſions,
pt to be forgotten; or by ſuggeſting to our minds ſuch con-
erations of religion, as are apt to quicken our endeavours,
ire our hope, alarm our fear, affect our ingenuity; and, by
ſe ſecret ſprings, provoke our zeal, and encourage our affi-
ity.

4. ANOTHER of the common operations of God's Spirit upon ns minds, is to inſpire them with ſuch joys and refreſhments are neceſſary to ſupport and comfort them under ſuch tempta-ns and difficulties, as would otherwiſe overwhelm them. r this was the promiſe which our Saviour, as we ſaid before, ve his diſciples, [b] I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give n another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; he dwelleth with you, and ſhall be in you: and accordingly, e apoſtle makes his earneſt prayer to God for his chriſtian mans, that [c] he would fill them with all joy and peace in be-ving, that they might abound in hope, through the power the Holy Ghoſt. This is the Spirit of conſolation which de the firſt chriſtians rejoice in afflictions, in tribulations, in treſſes. [d] This made the primitive ſaints undergo the moſt exquiſite Comfort-ing.

a Scott's Mediator. b John xiv. 16, 17. c Rom. xv. 13. d Vid. Cave's imitive Chriſtianity, Part II. c. 7. That the firſt chriſtians did bear all ds of tortures with an invincible courage and conſtancy of mind, is plain m the teſtimony of their greateſt enemies. Porphyry, in his book he wrote ainſt chriſtians, calls their religion *to barbaron tolmyma*, a piece of barbarous ldneſs: barbarous becauſe it differed from the way of worſhip among the eeks, with whom every thing was barbarous that agreed not with their in-tutions; and boldneſs, becauſe the chriſtians ſhewed an undaunted bravery bearing miſeries and torments: and though the heathen, in M. Felix, thinks folly and madneſs, yet he cannot but acknowledge their fearleſs conduct in s reſpect: Is it not, ſays he, a ſtrange folly and incredible boldneſs? They ſpiſe torments that are preſent, and yet fear thoſe that are future and uncer-n; and while they fear to die after death, in the mean time they are not raid to die; ſo ſillily do they flatter themſelves, and cajole their fears by a ceitful hope of ſome unknown comforts that ſhall ariſe to them. And in like

exquiſite torments with patience and magnanimity: this made the whole army of martyrs engage ſo valiantly, and come off with conqueſt and renown. For it is not conceivable, how ſo many tender virgins, and delicate matrons, and aged biſhops, could have endured thoſe long and dolorous martyrdoms, as they many times did, without a ſigh or groan; could have ſung in the flames, and ſmiled [e] upon racks, and triumphed upon wheels and calaſtas, inſenſible of pain, and ſtrangers as it were to their own bodies; had they not been ſupported by an inviſible hand, and refreſhed with ſuch ſtrong conſolations, as not only abated, but even quite extinguiſhed, what, at other times, they muſt have felt. Now the ſame comforts, though perhaps not in the ſame degrees, other good men have frequently experienced; ſometimes upon their undertaking an heroic work of piety or virtue; ſometimes in their conflict with great trials and temptations; ſometimes under the preſſure of mighty ſorrows and afflictions; and many times (it is to be hoped) at the momentous hour and extremities of death. On theſe, and ſuch like occaſions, there is no doubt, but that, as this divine Comforter has acceſs to our minds, he can give us ſuch tranſporting ideas of the favour of God, and the beatitude of another life, as ſhall even raviſh us from our ſenſe, and ſo ingroſs our whole attention, that we ſhall be altogether mindleſs of any pain or pleaſure of the body. For, if we ourſelves, by intenſe meditation, can ſometimes abſtract our minds from ſenſe, and the conſideration of any thing without us, it can be no hard matter to ſuppoſe that the Holy Ghoſt, who has the full controul of our minds, can ſtamp a joyous thought ſo vigorouſly upon them, as that it ſhall inſtantly tranſport us into an extaſy: but this (as we ſaid before) is not to be expected, but in great and urgent extremities; a ſtable ſerenity and ſatisfaction of mind, peace of conſcience, and a continued pleaſure in well-doing, being comforters ſufficient for the ordinary caſes of chriſtians.

Interceſſion.

5. ONE common operation more of the Holy Spirit upon mens minds, is to enable them to offer up their ſupplications to God, with affections ſuitable to ſuch an exerciſe. For, [f] as prayer is the immediate converſe of our ſouls with God, wherein we are obliged to withdraw them from all ſenſible objects into a divine and ſpiritual world, there is no one duty whatever, to which our carnal affections are more averſe. Nor are we only averſe to this duty, but as Elihu obſerves, [g] we cannot order our ſpeech to God, by reaſon of darkneſs; or, as one better inſtructed tells us, [h] we know not what to pray for as we ought, and

like maner Arian, in his collection of Epictetus's diſſertations, confeſſes it to be true of thoſe whom, in the ſtile of Julian, he calls Galileans, that they underwent torments and death with a mighty courage. What the rack, the wheel, and the calaſta were, as well as the other methods of torture to which the firſt chriſtians chearfully ſubmitted, vid. Cave, ibid. [e] Scott's Mediator. [f] Scott, ibid. [g] Job. xxxvii. 19. [h] Rom. viii. 26, 27.

d therefore the greater is the reaſon, that, in this office more pecially, the Spirit ſhould help our infirmities, and make inter-ſion for us, according to the will of God. And to this pur-ſe [i] he not only ſanctifies our wills and affections, in order to ke us both apprehend and deſire what we ought; but, having gotten in us a fit diſpoſition of mind, he, even in the time of ayer, [k] excites in us all thoſe graces and good affections (ſuch ſhame and ſorrow, in the confeſſion of our ſins; a ſenſe of our ed of mercy, and hope of obtaining it, in our ſupplication for rdon; reſignation to God's will, and dependence on his truth d goodneſs in our addreſſes for temporal mercies and delive-nces; hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, in our petitions r his grace and aſſiſtance; as well as love, and gratitude and miration of God, in our praiſes and thankſgivings for his lov-g kindneſs) wherein are comprized thoſe groanings which can-t be uttered, and wherein the very life and ſpirit of all prayer es conſiſt. [l] For it is a miſtaken notion to think, that the mere ility to conceive a prayer, and to utter it with great readineſs d warmneſs, is to pray by the Spirit; which, in the ſenſe we e to underſtand it now (when all extraordinary gifts and en-wments are ceaſed) is to offer up our petitions and addreſſes to od (let them be never ſo weak and imperfect) with an awful ar and dread of the divine majeſty, before whom we appear; ith a due veneration and reverence of all his glorious attributes d perfections; with a deep apprehenſion of our own ſinfulneſs d guilt, and conſequently, of our unworthineſs to approach s preſence; with a lively ſenſe of our wants and neceſſities, hich we come to have ſupplied; with an hearty deſire of the eſſings and favours we crave; and yet with an intire reſigna-on of ourſelves to his diſpoſal, and heavenly pleaſure. This to pray by the Spirit, and as many as pray in this manner, hether they uſe a ſet form of words, or their own immediate nceptions, they have the Spirit of prayer and ſupplication, hich will open their mouths, and enlarge their hearts, and in-ame their affections, and make them fervent and importunate, ppy and ſucceſsful, in all their addreſſes to the throne of grace.

THUS we have ſeen what the ſeveral gifts and operations of e holy Spirit are, which every good chriſtian may, in all ages, pend on, to relieve the infirmities of his nature; and to rengthen him in the performance of his duty. And how in-ſpenſibly neceſſary they are to theſe purpoſes, though we have ſome meaſure obſerved already, we ſhall now proceed more lly to conſider. The man indeed who is not convinced of this uſt be a ſtranger to himſelf, as well as the word of God, and careleſs obſerver of what paſſes in his own breaſt, as well as what is recorded in the holy ſcriptures. [m] For, when he gives

The neceſſity of theſe ordinary gifts and graces.

i Wilkins on the Gift of Prayer. k Scott's Mediator. l Edwards's Body of vinity, Vol. I. m Smalridge's Sermons.

gives himself leisure to take a survey of his own faculties, and observes how dark-sighted he is in the perception of divine truths; with what reluctance he chuses what his understanding plainly represents as good, and refuses what his own conscience directly pronounces to be evil, and how apt his affections are to rebel against the dictates of his reason, and to hurry him another way than he knows he is directed to go; when he sets before his thoughts the great variety of duties commanded, and of sins forbidden, and the perverseness of his own depraved nature, which gives him an antipathy to those duties, and a strong inclination to those sins; when he reflects on the power, and cunning, and vigilance of his spiritual enemies, always alluring him to sin, and seducing him from the practice of virtue; when he weighs with himself the necessity of practising every duty, and forsaking every kind of wickedness, in order to secure a good title to the promises of the gospel; when he takes a view of those particular obstacles which hinder him in the exercise of several graces, and of the strong temptations which prompt him to the commission of several sins; when he considers the aptness of human nature to grow weary of performing the same things, though in themselves never so pleasant, and its still greater disposition to grow faint, when the actions, continually to be repeated, are burdensome to flesh and blood; when he compares the necessity of perseverance, with the difficulty of it, the prevalence of things present and sensible, with the weakness, wherewith such as are absent and spiritual affect us: when I say, a considering man puts all these things together, he cannot but be convinced, that [n] narrow is the path which leads unto everlasting life, and that, without illumination from the Spirit of God, he shall not be able rightly to discern it; that strait is the gate which opens an entry into heaven, and that he cannot by the force of his own natural strength, without new power given him from above, and the secret influences of God's holy Spirit, adding force and energy to his own endeavours, force his way through it: conscious therefore of his weakness, he will acknowledge the necessity of God's grace; and being ready to sink through his own natural weight, unless supported by foreign help, he will cry out with St Peter, [o] Lord, save me, else I perish.

The Platonic and Pelagian notion confuted.

[p] SOME philosophers of old flattered the pride and vanity of men, by teaching them, that they wanted nothing to make them virtuous, but only a firm and steady resolution of being so; that this resolution they themselves were masters of, and might exert at their own pleasure. They confidently boasted, that their happiness was a thing wholly in their own power. "*Quid*
"*opus est votis?* say they to their disciples, what need is there
"to pray? make thyself a good man. It is idle to petition God
"for that, which thou canst bestow upon thyself." The Pelagian

n Matth. vii. 14. o Ibid. viii. 25.—xiv. 30. p Smalridge's Sermons.

ians afterwards raiſed their hereſy upon the principles which ſe philoſophers broached: they engaged in the quarrel of deaved nature againſt divine grace, and maintained, that all our l inclinations were capable of being ſubdued by our own unſted reaſon. "How ugly is envy? [q] How tormenting is revenge? How brutal is drunkenneſs? How pernicious is luſt? On the contrary, meekneſs, temperance, and beneficence how ſerene are they in their ſtate? and how commodious in their effects? and needs any man now, ſay they, any infuſion of ſupernatural light to determine his choice? all that he ſeems to need, is only this, that he do not turn fool, and deſert the uſe of thoſe faculties and powers which nature has given them." ut the ſober chriſtian hath learned from the ſcriptures, to ſpeak d think more humbly of himſelf, and more becomingly and agnificently of God. We are therein taught, that [r] we are t ſufficient of ourſelves to think, much more to do, any thing of ourſelves, but all our ſufficiency is of God; that it is [s] God ho worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleaſure; at [t] it is by the Spirit we muſt mortify the deeds of the body, we would live; and that [u] it is God, by his Spirit, who maketh perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in us at which is well-pleaſing in his ſight: from whence we may fer, that the moſt prudent advertency, and the moſt manly relution, the moſt rational love, and the moſt generous indignaon, that ever opinionative moraliſt could conceive, and fortify s breaſt withal, can never be able to ſecure a man againſt the btle approaches, or the violent aſſaults of ſin; that it is the vine grace only, which is our caſtle and defence in this reſpect; d whoever terminates his hopes, even of ſerving and pleaſing od, upon the conſidence of any other ſtrength, than what is rived from above, his hope is impious, and he muſt miſcarry.

"But is the Spirit of God ſo intirely the agent in this affair, as to allow the man no partnerſhip in it? Is there no uſe to be made of his reaſon, his conſcience, and other natural faculties in the work of his ſanctification? Is there no light in his underſtanding, to direct his will, no power in his will, to influence his actions, no part of the action, if it be good and praiſe-worthy, imputable to him? then farewel all liberty and freedom of choice; farewel all ſenſe and conſciouſneſs of guilt; all obligation to reward or puniſhment. Upon this ſuppoſition, the man is a mere machine, on whom all the promiſes and threats, all the exhortations and admonitions, all the calls and importunities, and exprobations of the word of God are thrown away: for, till ſome ſudden and irreſiſtible impulſe of this ſanctifying Spirit come upon him, to controul his natural propenſions, and give a new turn to his thoughts and deſires, "he

The manner and meaſure of the operation of grace.

q Young's Sermons, Vol. II. r 2 Cor. iii. 5. s Phil. ii. 13. t Rom. viii. 13. u Heb. xiii. 21.

"he must for ever despair of taking one step towards his own "reformation." It is no easy matter indeed to define precisely in what manner, or to what degree, the Spirit of God works upon the minds of men; both because the silence of scripture is too great, and our knowledge of the nature and intercourse of spirits too scanty, to afford us any clear and distinct perception of it. But notwithstanding this obscurity, there are some propositions, deducible from scripture and reason, which may possibly tend to illustrate this argument, and according to which, we may venture to assert,

Suitably to our rational faculties

1. * THAT the manner, in which the holy Spirit acts upon the minds of men, is suitable to their rational faculties, especially their understanding and will. It is a received maxim, I think, in all morality, that what naturally makes the understanding to perceive, is evidence proposed and attended to; and what makes the will to chuse, or refuse, is something represented by the understanding either as good, or evil. To say, that evidence proposed and considered, is not sufficient to make the understanding approve; or that the greatest good proposed, or the greatest evil threatened, when equally believed, and reflected on, are not sufficient to engage the will, to chuse the good, and refuse the evil, is a contradiction in itself, and therefore cannot be true.

PUT the case then, × that we have such an aversion to the truths proposed to us in the gospel, as can only make us indispose to attend them, but cannot hinder our conviction, when we do attend; that we have such a renitency to the good, we are to chuse, and such a propensity to the evil, we should decline, as only indispose us to believe the one, the chiefest good, and the other, the worst of evils; but yet, what we do really believe to be our chiefest good, will still be chosen, and what we apprehend to be the worst of evils, while we continue under that conviction, will still be refused by us: supposing this, I say, all that seems requisite to these ends, is, that the holy Spirit should so illuminate our understandings, that we, attending to, and considering what lies before us, should apprehend, and be convinced of our duty; and that he should so propound the blessings and miseries of the gospel, that upon due consideration we may be convinced, that the former are the chiefest good, the latter the worst of evils, and thereupon be excited to chuse the one, and refuse the other. But now to consider, in order to approbation and conviction; to chuse, in order to our good, and to refuse, that we may avoid misery, must be the action, not of God, but of man; though the light which does convince, and the motives which do engage him thus to chuse, and to refuse, are certainly from God. All therefore that can be expected from God to do in this case, without offering violence to our rational faculties, is to propose such motives, as are sufficient to engage our choice,

* See Clagget against Owen, Vol. I. and Whitby of Grace. × Whitby, ibid.

oice, and to infuſe ſuch light into our minds as may be ſuffi-ent to work our conviction.

SINCE then the many motives contained in the ſcriptures to ngage fallen man to return from the evil of his ways, were cer-inly deſigned for that end; either they muſt be ſufficient to ngage him ſo to do, or elſe the higheſt motives that can be of-ered muſt be inſufficient: becauſe all other motives to deter us om an action as pernicious to us are nothing in compariſon of, Depart from me, ye wicked, into everlaſting fire; all the evils, e can ſuffer from the hands of men, are trifles, in reſpect of is inflictions, who can deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell-fire. nd, in like manner, ſince the promiſes of eternal happineſs, as he reward of our obedience, were certainly deſigned to make s obedient to the will of God, either they muſt be ſufficient to hat end, or no inducements can be ſufficient; becauſe this one otive of heaven eminently contains in it all others, and the njoyment of God, and everlaſting happineſs, when ſeriouſly onſidered, cannot but have a more conſtraining power in it, to he performance of our duty, than all the united ſtrength of vorldly greatneſs, and honours, and pleaſures, can offer us.

BUT then, becauſe the bleſſings and miſeries of another world re of an inviſible nature, and only to be diſcerned by the eye f faith; becauſe they are moral and ſpiritual motives, which re only preſent to our minds by actual conſideration and re-ection; and becauſe they are not always preſent, when temp-tions invite, and ſenſual objects, which we ſo much affect, do oſely beſet us; it ſeems therefore neceſſary that the divine pirit ſhould aſſiſt us on theſe occaſions; either, 1. by repre-nting the divine truths which the holy ſcriptures contain and reſs upon us, more clearly to our underſtandings; that we ay have a fuller evidence, ſtronger conviction, and aſſurance of hem: Or, 2. by bringing theſe truths to our remembrance; hat ſo they may be preſent with us, when it is requiſite to en-ble us to reſiſt temptations, and to encourage us to the perfor-ance of our duty.

THUS one way or the other the Holy Spirit's working upon ur minds, ſuppoſing him to work according to their natures, uſt be, by inſpiring and impreſſing them with ſuch thoughts nd ideas as are moſt apt to engage us to believe and obey the oſpel; which ideas, as they are inducements to the perfor-ance of our duty, which we are not a little averſe to, may be roperly called Exciting Grace; as they are reſtraints to our ommiſſion of ſin, which we are but too ſtrongly inclined to, ay as fitly be ſtiled Reſtraining Grace; as they are given, be-re we deſire them, and are often raiſed up in us, when we ink nothing of them, they fall under the notion of Prevent-g Grace; as they help us in the conſideration of our duty, nd forward our endeavours and inclinations to perform it, they

How thoughts infuſed by the Spirit may be termed different kinds of grace.

may be reputed Aſſiſting Grace; and laſtly, as they continue to do this more and more, after the firſt converſion from ſin, and ſome prevailing diſpoſitions to ſerve God with ſincerity of heart, they may likewiſe be called the Subſequent Grace of God.

With our own endeavours.

2. SINCE it is evident from the holy ſcriptures, [y] that God requires, and expects, that we ſhould put forth our own endeavours after all thoſe things which the Spirit is given to work in us; it follows, that ſuch is the nature of his operations, that, without our own care and aſſiduity, they will not avail us. The reaſon is, becauſe it were high preſumption to ſay, that although God requires us to be active and diligent, it may be never the worſe for us, though we be ſupine and lazy; which might well enough be ſaid, upon ſuppoſition, that the graces of the Spirit might be attained without any application of our own. When therefore God promiſes his people, [z] a new heart and a new ſpirit will I put within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes, and yet, by the very ſame prophet, requires them, [a] to caſt away from them all their tranſgreſſions, and to make themſelves a new heart, and a new ſpirit; for why will you die, O houſe of Iſrael? From hence it is plain, that notwithſtanding God's promiſe of giving them a new heart, it was neceſſary for them to renew their own hearts; and what can this ſignify, but that the promiſe is not abſolute, but ſuppoſes the concurrence of their own endeavours, and, conſequently, was given to encourage them, but not to make them negligent? In like manner, when the apoſtle tells us that [b] God will work in us, both to will and to do, he nevertheleſs requires us to work out our own ſalvation with fear and trembling; this he certainly would not do, unleſs our own induſtry were neceſſary to the attainment of thoſe graces which he is ſaid to be the author of. In ſhort, ſince the Holy Spirit is not only promiſed to produce in us all needful qualifications for eternal life, but we are alſo commanded, exhorted, intreated, and that with the moſt ſerious and affectionate importunity, to repent, and be converted, and to abide and perſevere in holineſs; and all this, with promiſes of an eternal reward, if we do, and with threatenings of everlaſting puniſhment, if we do not; it follows, that the Spirit is not promiſed to work his graces in our hearts in ſuch a manner as to make our own endeavours unneceſſary to the attainment of them: for this were to make all the commandments and exhortations of God's word a ſolemn piece of pageantry, and, in effect, to ſay, that God hath required us, under the greateſt penalties, and with the moſt alluring promiſes, to obtain thoſe qualifications, which will nevertheleſs be thruſt upon us, though we do nothing to obtain them.

3. SINCE

[y] Clagget againſt Owen, Vol. I. [z] Ezek. xxxvi. 26. [a] Chap. xviii. 31.
[b] Phil. ii. 13, 12.

3. SINCE by the experience we have of human nature, we Gradually.
, that cuſtoms are not eaſily and preſently put off, and that
atters of difficulty cannot be made familiar to us, but by long uſe
d practice; that they particularly, who are accuſtomed to do evil,
nnot on a ſudden learn to do well; that the difficulties of a reli-
ous life preſs moſt upon us, when we firſt enter upon it, and
ear away inſenſibly by continuance in well-doing; as, on the con-
ary, that virtue is improved by exerciſe. and [d] the path of the
ſt, as the wiſe man ſpeaks, is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth
ore and more unto the perfect day: ſince experience, I ſay,
aches us theſe truths, we muſt needs acknowledge, that the
oly Spirit does not produce the effects of his grace in the minds
men all at once, but accommodates his operations to the
ate, in which they are at preſent, and prompts them in that
nendment, which the meaſure of their capacity will admit.

WHEN therefore the holy ſcripture requires us to grow in
race, [e] to be ſtrong in grace, [f] to go on to perfection, and to
ound in the work of the Lord; when it acquaints us that
ere are [g] babes in Chriſt, as well as perfect men; ſuch as re-
ire the ſincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby,
well as ſuch [h] as have arrived to the meaſure of the ſtature
the fulneſs of Chriſt; when our bleſſed Saviour compares the
tainment of a ſtate of grace, to the growing [i] of ſeed ſown in
e ground, [k] which ſprings up and ripens gradually, and to a
piece of leaven which diffuſes itſelf through the whole maſs
bread, by a ſecret and imperceptible working; we can hardly
ppoſe that a riſe to any eminent degree of goodneſs, from a
ntrary habit, can be inſtantaneous. For though we pretend
t to limit the poſſibilities of God's acting, yet, in the ordinary
urſe of things, [m] the ſinner muſt firſt learn to be afraid of
od's angry juſtice, muſt be heartily ſorry for his ſins, muſt at-
ntively conſider the threats and promiſes of the goſpel, muſt
oid the occaſions of ſin, muſt fortify himſelf with ſtrong reſo-
tions to forſake his wicked courſes, and make many earneſt
ayers to God, before he can ſubdue his luſts, overcome the
orld, and yield a ſincere obedience to all God's commandments:
d, by conſequence, he muſt not expect that the operations of
e Holy Spirit will make him a good man any other way than
ſlow degrees and advances.

4. ONCE more, ſince our bleſſed Lord has compared the Imperceptibly.
pirit to the wind, which none of us can give any tolerable ac-
unt of; this, in ſome meaſure, may acquaint us, that its ope-
tions, even when they abide upon us, are many times remote
om our underſtanding; that they move us without our having
y diſtinct perception of them, or being able to difference them
from

[d] Prov. iv 18. [e] 2 Tim. ii. 1. [f] Heb. vi. 1. [g] 1 Pet. ii. 2. [h] Eph. iv. 13. [i] Mark iv. 27. [k] Matth. xiii. 33. [l] Clagget againſt Owen, Vol I. [m] Stanhope's Sermons on ſeveral occaſions.

from our natural reaſoning and cogitations; and to convince him of this, let any one conſider by what ſteps he came off from a wicked life, and proceeded in a good one. For did not his change firſt begin with a conviction of ſin, and the miſchief of it, and, conſequent hereupon, an hatred and deteſtation, grounded upon ſuch arguments as theſe; that it is repugnant to reaſon, diſpleaſing to God, deſtructive to both ſoul and body, in making them obnoxious to divine wrath and vengeance, and that eternity of miſery, which the preſent fleeting pleaſures of wickedneſs are but a ſorry exchange for? Again, will not his advance in virtue be found to owe itſelf to the contemplation of the beauty, the reaſonableneſs, the advantages of holineſs, the alluring rewards it propoſes, and the happineſs it ſecures, both in this life and in the next? How then did theſe arguments prevail at laſt? Was it not by frequent meditation, by inſinuating themſelves into the mind by degrees, by the common methods of reading, or hearing, and weighing God's word, by vanquiſhing the prejudices of our corrupt hearts, by diſcuſſing and diſplaying the evidence of truth, by exciting good deſires, ſtrengthening thoſe deſires with holy reſolutions, and making good theſe reſolutions by diligent endeavours, and ſtedfaſt perſeverance? But ſtill the finger of God is in all this. It is he, that brings theſe conſiderations into our hearts at firſt; he, that faſtens them upon us when they are there; he, that adds new life and vigour to our deſires and intentions, and gives efficacy and ſucceſs to our (otherwiſe) weak endeavours. He convinces our judgments, kindles good inclinations, perſuades, allures, threatens, deters, terrifies, reproaches, comforts, commands, and performs all other offices neceſſary to piety; and all this by infuſions ſo gentle, ſo ſweet, ſo ſecret, ſo tender, as to fall in with our own thoughts and meditations, inſomuch, that if the ſcripture had not declared that all the good we do, proceeds from God, we could not diſtinguiſh many times between the motions of this bleſſed Spirit, and thoſe of our own.

If then the Spirit of God acts upon our minds in a manner ſuitable to our rational faculties, and in ſo eaſy and familiar a way, as to be taken oftentimes for the ſuggeſtions of our own breaſts; [n] if it mingles itſelf with our thoughts, with the inward dictates and reaſonings of our minds; then every admonition from the pulpit, every advice from a friend, every good book we read, every pious example we ſee, every motion and intention to do well, every conviction and check of our own conſcience, is a call and impulſe from above; and, as oft as any man refuſes to comply with theſe, ſo oft he reſiſts, and grieves, and quenches this ſpirit within himſelf. And, in like manner, if the Spirit of God be communicated in ſuch a meaſure, as is proportioned to every man's preſent exigence, and in ſuch a manner,

Not inſtantaneous,

n Stanhope's Sermons on ſeveral occaſions.

nner, as requires every man's endeavours and co-operation, make it effectual; then are its impreſſions upon our minds ther ſo ſudden and inſtantaneous, nor yet ſo violent and irre-ble, as ſome may imagine. The beginning of our converſion eed may be ſaid to be inſtantaneous, there being always a par-lar point of time, wherein the firſt excitations of grace come n us. [o] But all the while that we are tending to a refor-tion, and ſtruggling with our luſts, and confirming our reſo-ions of well-doing, be it longer or ſhorter, according to the wer of evil habits, and the different degrees of divine aſſiſtance, ong may the work be ſaid to be going on leiſurely, and this uſu-y is a conſiderable ſpace from its firſt beginning, to its coming a ſettled ſtate. During this time [p] the Spirit acts only as an ſtant to our infirmities, and not as an undertaker of the work, l a bearer of the whole burden. Our own concurrence l endeavours are required; nor can they derogate from his ry, ſo long as, with the great apoſtle St Paul, we aſcribe all e good we do to him, and even account our own endeavours e effects of his aſſiſting us, [q] by the grace of God I am what m, and his grace, which was beſtowed on me, was not in n; for I laboured more abundantly—yet not I, but the grace God which was with me.

St PAUL indeed is the greateſt inſtance of a powerful con- nor irre-rſion that we meet with in ſcripture. He was confounded by ſiſtible, light ſhining round about him, brighter than the ſun, by hich he was ſtruck down to the earth, and heard a dreadful ice from heaven, ſaying, Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou e? Now in all this he was purely paſſive, and the action done on him was phyſical and irreſiſtible. But then, when he in-ires of the holy Jeſus, Lord, what wouldeſt thou have me to ? When he prays earneſtly for the forgiveneſs of his ſin; hen he ſubmits to that baptiſm which Chriſt appointed for that d, and for the dedication of himſelf to his ſervice; when, be-g told what grievous things he was to ſuffer for the name of ſus, he, notwithſtanding, was not diſobedient to the heavenly ſion, but went and preached up that faith which he had for-erly oppoſed; [r] theſe are actions of deliberation and free choice, d do therefore evince, that a ſubſequent conſent and concur-nce, even in a miraculous converſion, was neceſſary to make it fectual to the purpoſe of ſalvation.

BE it then allowed, that the firſt irradiations of preventing ace come from God, as ſpontaneouſly, and enter the ſoul of an, as irreſiſtibly, as the heavenly viſion did St Paul; yet, pon the ſuppoſition that all the future proceſs of our conver-on is compulſary, our virtue would be the effect of neceſſity, ot of choice, and conſequently, loſe all its value and reward; and

o Newcome's Sermons, Vol. I. p Stanhope's Sermons on ſeveral occaſions.
1 Cor. xv. 10. r Acts xxvi. 13, &c. s Whitby's Appendix to 2 Cor. vi.

and the reformation of thoſe, upon whom the Spirit did not work irreſiſtibly, would be impoſſible, which is the utmoſt that can be ſaid to excuſe impenitence. Upon this ſuppoſition, I ſay, God's repreſenting it as a matter of admiration and aſtoniſhment that the wicked were not reclaimed, and complaining of it in the ſtile of the prophet, † Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for I have nouriſhed, and brought up children, and they have rebelled againſt me. The ox knows his owner, and the aſs his maſter's crib, but Iſrael doth not know me, my people doth not conſider, is not only highly impertinent and ridiculous, but injurious to his divine truth and veracity, and a kind of cruel inſult upon the infirmities of human nature. Some reſolution therefore muſt be found out, both to clear this doctrine from any reflections upon the divine attributes, and at the ſame time, to make it conſiſtent with the freedom of our own wills, which can only be done by reſerving to a man a partial agency, by ſuppoſing that the Spirit is the principal, and ourſelves acceſſary agents in the work of our ſanctification.

but conſiſtently with the freedom of our wills.

Now ‖ the freedom of a rational nature does not, as ſome may imagine, conſiſt in a liberty to do, or not to do any thing according to pleaſure (for as God is an abſolutely free agent, yet he cannot ſin; and as angels and devils are both moral agents, yet the one cannot, and the other cannot but ſin) but it conſiſts rather in a capacity to think, and in a liberty to act and chuſe upon ſuch thinking: ſo that the clearer the thought and conception is, and the more conſtantly his choice is determined by it, the more a man riſes to the higheſt acts and exerciſe of his liberty. Whether the will follows the underſtanding, and chuſes always according to ſome preſent idea in the mind, is not ſo intirely to our purpoſe to inquire: this we know by our own experience, that we have a liberty of turning our minds to ſome ideas, and of turning them away from others; that we can think longer or ſhorter, more exactly and ſteadily, or more ſlightly and ſuperficially, on the things that come into our minds, as we pleaſe; and in this natural freedom of directing or diverting our thoughts, a great deal of our liberty does conſiſt. When therefore the Spirit of God, which has immediate acceſs to our minds at all times, either upon our hearing, or reading the word, or obſerving the tendency of ſome providential event, raiſes ſuch ideas in our minds as ſeem to call for our attention; we have it in our power, either to entertain or diſmiſs them, either to cheriſh and improve them by meditation, or to turn to other objects, and ſo forget them. When the Spirit intermixes itſelf with our conſciences, and in order to blend and incline our wills, infuſes its kind perſuaſions into our minds; when we hear a ſilent voice within; * as we turn to the right hand or to the left, THIS IS THE WAY, WALK YE IN IT; it is matter

† Iſa. i. 2, 3. ‖ Burnet on the Articles. * Iſa. xxx. 21.

ur option, whether we will regard or baffle these admoni-
s, whether we will settle them in our minds, by serious con-
ration, or stifle them as they arise, and call up, in their
n, other reflections and amusements. And so again, when
Spirit enters into the soul in order to reprove us, and, after
commission of any sin, lays before us (as it were in a lively
cription) all the aggravations of our guilt; we may fix, or
may turn aside the eyes of our minds from beholding it, we
enter into good resolutions, upon the conviction it brings,
with the adulterous woman in Solomon, we may wipe our
uths, and say, I have committed no wickedness. This is a
erty that God himself knows he has put in our constitution;
with regard to this, all his commands and exhortations, his
s and invitations, his threatenings and exprobations, are both
nificant and sincere. Now, if we take notice of these ideas;
ve listen to these persuasions, if we comply with these re-
ofs, when at any time they arise in our breasts, we encou-
e the Holy Spirit to come again with fresh and more supplies,
give strength and vigour to its operations: but, if we give
se things another turn, as certainly we may if we please, we
t a damp upon its endeavours for our good, and make the re-
ns of it every time more slow and languid: [y] for unto every
e that hath, *i. e.* makes improvement of what he hath, shall
given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath
t, or makes no use of what he hath, shall be taken away,
en that which he hath.

How to know whether we have the Spirit, and how to improve it.

THUS we have considered the existence and reality, the na-
re and necessity of a divine principle working in the minds of
n, in order to their sanctification; and, as far as we can ga-
r, have endeavoured to explain in what manner, and to what
gree, it operates upon us, and now the final questions are,
w we shall know whether we have such a principle abiding
us; if we have not, how we may acquire it; or, if we have,
what means we may preserve and improve it? And to this
are the rather incited, because the apostle assures us, that if
y have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Now the
ly way for any man to know whether he is under the care
d influence of the spirit of grace, is to judge by [z] his having
s understanding enlightened with divine knowledge; by the
ht disposition of his will and affections; by the change which
wrought in his life and manners; and by those other marks
d evidences which we have mentioned before. [a] When
erefore, in reading the holy scriptures, he finds the veil of
rkness removed from before his understanding, those clouds of
norance that had overcast his mind, dispersed, and the doubts,
der which he had for some time laboured, suddenly cleared
up;

[x] Prov. xxx, 20. [y] Matth. xxv. 29. [z] Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I.
malridge's Sermons.

up; when such pious thoughts, as were wont to pass transiently, are, for a considerable time, dwelt upon, so as to leave behind them deep and lasting impressions; when these are suggested to him without his seeking, and are urged and impressed upon him so importunately, that he cannot chuse but listen to them; when from a calm and serious consideration of the state of his own soul, the odiousness and danger of sin, and the beauty and necessity of holiness, he is led to make good and pious resolutions of serving God with greater purity for the time to come; when he finds a sudden impulse upon his spirits, rousing him up to the performance of some important duty which he had before neglected, or an unexpected check stopping him in the midst of his course, when he is rushing on blindly and impetuously to the commission of some heinous sin; when in his devotions he finds his attention fixed, his affection inflamed, and his heart melted within him; when, whilst the voice of God's minister, preaching the saving truths of the gospel, sounds in his ears, he is sensible of an inward voice, speaking with greater force and efficacy to his soul, to his understanding, and to his heart; when under the pressure of any grievous affliction, he feels unspeakable comfort and consolation; when, as [b] the prophet expresses it, light arises up in the midst of darkness, when beauty is given unto him for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; and all this while his design and intention is to serve God in righteousness and true holiness all the days of his life: from these and the like indications he may discover that the Spirit of God abideth in him; which if he does, [c] the only way to retain this sacred guest is, to treat him kindly, and to shew himself exceeding thankful that he will be pleased to stay with him, and confer so great a blessing and dignation on him. And to this purpose he must be careful to expel all unclean and impure thoughts, to cleanse his heart from the love of sin, to wash his hands in innocence, and to preserve his whole life and conversation clear from all wilful pollution. And not only so, but he must be very cautious in his converse with the world, lest that engrosses his thoughts and affections, lest [d] the cares of life, and the deceitfulness of riches choak the seed that is sown in our hearts, and it become unfruitful: And, because God will have the grace which he hath given, maintained and approved by the means of his own appointment, his reading and hearing his word, receiving the sacramental supper, and addressing his prayers and supplications constantly to the throne of mercy, will be no less necessary to stir up the gift, and confirm the divine principle that is in us.

How to acquire it.

AND, in like manner, if it be our sad fortune to be destitute of this heavenly gift, our care and endeavour must be not to resist its motions and suggestions, when at any time they come casually

b Isa. lxi. 3. c Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. d Matth. xiii. 22.

aſually upon us, but to receive them with a willing mind, and o liſten to them with all readineſs and attention; to prepare nd cleanſe our hearts by ſincere contrition and remorſe for our ns, by bewailing the follies and vanities of our paſt life, and by eſolving never to commit the like again. Grace, we muſt wn, is the chief of God's benefits, and that which infinitely ranſcends all the other bleſſings we enjoy: and [e] therefore we nay obſerve that however he thinks fit to beſtow temporal good hings upon the evil and unthankful, upon thoſe that ſeek them ot, and upon thoſe that do acknowledge them ſent from him; et ſanctifying grace he accounts a pearl of greater price than o be caſt away upon the regardleſs. It is a certain benefit and permanent good; and therefore he beſtows it upon another ort of condition; he gives it only to them that aſk, *i. e.* to hem who wiſely eſtimate, and worthily value, and earneſtly eſire this heavenly gift. Would we then obtain of God a leſſing as neceſſary to the ſuſtenance of our ſpiritual life, as ur daily bread is to that of the body; let us every day reſort nto him for it, in earneſt, fervent, ſtrong and importunate rayer. And indeed this is the only bleſſing that can juſtify a rayer thus circumſtantiated: to deſire any other gift with ſuch measure of importunity, would be immoderate, would be ſinful; it is grace only that we can deſire inſtantly, that we can eſire impatiently, and yet not offend: [f] This is the kingdom of God that ſuffers violence, and the violent take it by force. Since therefore in our daily prayers we acknowledge that hrough the weakneſs of our moral nature we can do no good hing without it, that all holy deſires, all good counſels, and all uſt works do proceed from it; there is this neceſſity for our onſtant application to God for its aid and aſſiſtance, that in eeping his commandments we may pleaſe him both in will and eed.

CHAP. VII.

Of the STATE of the Soul after Death, and RESURRECTION of the Body.

THAT the ſoul of man is a ſpiritual and immaterial ſubſtance, created by God with ſuch powers, and qualities, nd operations, as can never ariſe from matter, however moved r organized, is what we had occaſion in ſome meaſure to prove lſewhere: and (according to our promiſe then) ſhall now proceed to inquire farther into its diſtinct nature and immortality: nly we would premiſe, that when we ſay our ſouls are im-

In what ſenſe the ſoul is immortal.

e Young's Sermons. f Matth. xi. 12.

mortal, [a] we do not mean that they are by nature such as can never periſh or be deſtroyed: for, as God alone has a neceſſary exiſtence, and what is eſſential to his very being, he alone is abſolutely, and independently, and of himſelf immortal. All other beings, whether bodies or ſpirits, have but a borrowed exiſtence, and may loſe it with the ſame facility that they had it: the ſame power of God which produced them out of nothing, may thither remand them again when he pleaſes. In this reſpect our ſouls have no more privilege than our bodies, nor the whole univerſe than one ſingle atom. And therefore when we aſcribe immortality to the ſoul, we always include the will and good pleaſure of God, in thus making and thus preſerving it: and with this reſtriction our meaning is, [b] "That "when the body dies and falls to the ground, this principle "which we call the ſoul, by God's order and appointment, ſtill "remains and lives ſeparate from it; that it ſtill retains the "power of underſtanding, of thinking, of reaſoning, of re"membering, and is capable either of happineſs or miſery, in "its abſence from the body." So that in treating of this argument we ſhall ſhew,

I. THAT the ſoul of man does not die, but when ſeparated from the body, has a place of abode provided by God till the reſurrection of its body again.

II. THAT in this ſtate it does not ſleep and become inſenſible till the day of the reſurrection, but is immediately admitted into an happy or miſerable condition, according as the man has behaved in his paſt life. And,

III. THAT its happineſs or miſery, in this intermediate ſtate, is partial only, and not ſo complete, as it will be after the reunion of the ſoul and body.

Its immortality proved.

I. THE ſoul of man in this preſent ſtate indeed is very nearly united to the body, [c] by whoſe means it communicates with the material and ſenſible world: it partakes of its pleaſures and pains, and acquires moſt of its knowledge by the ideas which the ſenſes impart to it: but that in its own nature it is ſpiritual, active, and intelligent, and ſo independent on fleſh and blood; that by the grace and donation of God, it has the power of immortality in it, and ſo cannot undergo the fate of the body when it returns to the duſt, from whence it originally came; both true philoſophy and divine revelation, the voice of human reaſon, and the teſtimony of the ſacred ſcriptures conſpire to aſſure us. It is certain however that he who made us, beſt knows our frame, of what parts we are compoſed, and what duration he hath aſſigned to each part; and therefore, when we are diſputing of the nature and condition of the ſoul of man, and its diſtinction from the body, if we can find that God, the creator of both, has engaged in the controverſy, we ought with all

a Martin on Natural Religion. b Tillotſon's Sermons. c Whiſton's Sermons.

all submission and humility to search after and subscribe to his infallible determination. To begin then with the evidence we have from scripture.

From scripture and antiquity.

THE book of Ecclesiastes, in many parts of it, is a kind of dramatic composition, [e] wherein Solomon introduces the Epicurean, if we may be allowed so to call him by anticipation, advancing several strange positions, and among the rest, deriding the notion of the soul's immortality, [f] Who knoweth the spirit of a man, that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast, that goeth downward to the earth? as if he had said: "As for the "talk of man's soul being immortal, who can demonstrate the "problem? Who can discern any sign of difference between "the soul of a man, and that of a brute, in order to prove that "the one goes upward, to the regions of permanent and eternal "beings, the other downward, *i. e.* perishes together with the "body, and moulders in the earth?" Now what Solomon here, in the beginning of this book, questions in the person of another, towards the conclusion of it, and where he comes to speak his own serious and resolved thoughts, he peremptorily determines in these words, [g] then shall the dust return to the earth, and the spirit shall return to God that gave it; for the only evident sense that they can bear is this——That "whereas man "consists of two parts, body and soul, the condition of these "two, when he dies, will be very different: for the body, be"ing at first taken out of the dust of the earth, and so of a cor"ruptible constitution, shall go back into the earth again, and "moulder into dust; but the soul as it is of another and more "excellent original, shall not perish with the body, but return "to that God, from whence it came, and with whom it shall "continue safe and inviolate, according to the author of the "book of Wisdom, [h] the souls of the righteous are in the hands "of God, and there shall no torment touch them."

WHEN our blessed Saviour came into the world, the contention in the Jewish church, between the Sadducees and the Pharisees, as to this point of doctrine, were very fierce; for [i] the Sadducees, as St Luke has stated the matter in debate, said, there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit, but the Pharisees confessed both. [k] The Sadducees believed indeed, that there is a God, though whether they believed God himself to be corporeal, is not without good reason questioned by some: but this is certain, that besides God, they believed nothing subsisted, but what is perceptible to sense: and hence they denied angels to be permanent substances, and what they read of their appearing in scripture, they always imputed to phantasms, occasionally formed by God, when he was minded at any time to reveal his will to mankind, and then vanishing and disappearing. Agreeably

e Bull's Sermons, Vol. I. f Eccles. iii. 21. g Ibid. xii. 7. h Ibid. ix. 1.
i Acts xxiii. 8. k Bull, ibid.

ably to the ſame hypotheſis, they denied likewiſe the ſpirits of men, as diſtinct ſubſtances from the body, and able to ſubſiſt without them; and hence farther, by a neceſſary chain of conſequences, they denied the reſurrection of the bodies of men after death: for to what purpoſe ſhould the body of man be raiſed, if there was no ſoul in being to be united to it again, and re-inform it? The Phariſees, on the other ſide, held a quite contrary chain of doctrines, viz. that there are certain immaterial and inviſible beings, both angels, and ſpirits of men likewiſe, diſtinct ſubſtances from their bodies, and ſubſiſting after the death of their bodies; and that therefore there ſhall be a reſurrection. He that believed one of theſe hypotheſes, believed all; and he that denied any one of them, equally denied the reſt. Now the ſacred hiſtorian expreſsly tells us, that St Paul declared himſelf on the Phariſees ſide in this controverſy; and though it cannot be denied, that he made this profeſſion with a deſign to ſave himſelf from preſent danger, yet that his profeſſion was honeſt and true, and void of all deceit and equivocation, will hardly be denied, when it is conſidered farther, that it was intirely agreeable to his maſter's doctrine and determination.

WHEN the Sadducees came to our Saviour with an intricate queſtion, as they thought it, and ſuch as implied a kind of impoſſibility for the dead ever to riſe again, he reſolves it in this manner; [l] as touching the reſurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was ſpoken to you by God, ſaying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob; God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. The words are taken from the third chapter of Exodus, where, out of the flaming buſh, God ſpeaks to Moſes concerning Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, many ages after the death of theſe patriarchs, and our Saviour lays down this hypotheſis as the foundation of his argument, that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. [m] Since then, for God to be any one's God, neceſſarily implies a preſent relation between God and that perſon, and no relation can continue, where either of the relatives ceaſes, and is taken away; it muſt certainly follow, that Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob were alive and did ſubſiſt, viz. in their ſpirits, when God ſpake theſe words to Moſes, *i. e.* many ages after the death of their bodies. Our Saviour therefore when he arms his diſciples againſt the fear of man, by ſhewing them how contemptible that diſpleaſure was, which could not reach the ſoul, ſaying, [n] Fear not them, which kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul; but rather fear him, which is able to deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell, makes the ſeparate exiſtence of our ſoul, after the death of the body, a neceſſary and fundamental article of our faith: for if the ſoul's dependence on the body were ſuch, that the diſſolution of the one did unavoidably draw on the death of

l Matth. xxii. 31. 32. m Bull's Sermons. n Matth. x. 28.

e other, then he, who kills the body, would, at the ſame e, murder the ſoul too. Nay, there is this farther argu- of the immortality, and independency of the ſoul, [o] that hoſe glorious acceſſions and improvements which the ſcrip- mentions, as accruing to good men, at the reſurrection, ng ſimply to the body. It is ſaid, [p] that our bodies ſhall be ged, that they ſhall be refined and ſublimated, and ſo pre- d to ſuſtain the joys of heaven, which otherwiſe they could do: but no ſuch ſubſtantial improvements are mentioned of ſoul; which we may take for an intimation, how noble and llent a being the ſoul is in its original nature; that it is hed from God, and impreſſed with his image, and that this e imports no leſs, than ſuch perfections, as are divine; that elf it is incorruptible, and immortal, and of an immenſe capa- both to know and enjoy. It is conſtituted indeed to ſee ugh the body, as through a glaſs, and that glaſs at preſent ry dark; but when once the glaſs ſhall come to be bright- , *i. e* when the ſoul ſhall be diſcharged from the groſſneſs eſh, and the cloud of paſſions, and the ſtains of ſin, it will no other elevation, to behold the face of God; no other city to comprehend all the treaſures of wiſdom; no other gth to bear the weight of eternal glory.

t would be endleſs to go on deſcanting upon every argu- exhibited in ſcripture to prove the ſeparate exiſtence of an ſouls; and therefore, to comprize ſeveral in one ſentence, n our Saviour promiſes the penitent thief upon the croſs, erily, I ſay unto thee, to-day ſhalt thou be with me in diſe; and, at the point of death, commits his human ſoul od, [r] Father, into thy hands I commend my ſpirit; when tephen, as he was expiring, commits in like manner his ſoul hriſt himſelf, now exalted to the right hand of the majeſty igh, with [s] Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit; when St Paul the Corinthians, that [t] if our earthly houſe of this ta- acle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe made with hands eternal in the heavens, and prays for the ſſalonians, that [u] their whole ſpirit, and ſoul, and body might

Young's Sermons, Vol. I. p 1 Cor. xv. 51. q Luke xxiii. 43. r Ibid. 46. s vii. 59. t 2 Cor. v. 1. u 1 Theſſ. v. 23. The apoſtle is here ſuppoſed ne to juſtify the antient philoſophy, that man (as Nemeſius ſtiles him) is *res hypoſtaſis*, a compound of three different parts. This was the doc- of the Pythagoreans, as we learn from Jamblicus, who, having told us man conſiſts of ſoul and body, adds, that the ſoul conſiſts of two parts, one d with reaſon, and the other without reaſon. This alſo was the philoſo- f the Platoniſts, as we learn from Laertius, who informs us, that there is n a ſoul irrational, which follows the affections of the body, and a mind, uſeth the body as its inſtrument, and fights againſt it. This alſo was the ne of the Stoics, and therefore Antoninus makes the three conſtituent of man to be *ſooma pſyche* and *nous*, the body, ſoul, and mind; which is iſe maintained by ſome modern philoſophers, Gaſſendus eſpecially, and allis [de Anima Brut. c. vii.] beyond all poſſible contradiction; though t laſt perhaps may be only a ſtrife about words, ſince the animal ſpirits cluded in the body. Whitby in Locum.

might be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; when the author to the Hebrews tells us, that, by virtue of the catholic communion, chriſtians are not only joined * to an innumerable company of angels, but to the ſociety likewiſe of the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect; when St Peter plainly enough affirms, x that the ſpirits of thoſe wicked men, that were deſtroyed by the flood, were in being, reſerved in priſon, and in chains of darkneſs, to the judgment of the great day; and St John, in the y Revelation tells us, that under the altar he ſaw the ſouls of them that were ſlain for the word of God, which cried with a loud voice, How long, O Lord, holy and true, doſt thou not judge, and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? When almoſt in every page of the New Teſtament, I ſay, we meet with ſuch paſſages as theſe, we cannot but conclude that the doctrine of the immortality of man's ſoul, its independency on the body, and ſubſiſtence after its ſeparation from it, is the doctrine of Chriſt and his apoſtles, and one of the fundamentals in that form of ſound words which they have delivered to the ſaints. And accordingly we may obſerve that the ſaints of old lived and died in full aſſurance of the truth of this doctrine; thus the apoſtolic biſhop and martyr Polycarp, when brought to the ſtake, begins his prayer thus: z O thou God of the whole race of righteous men, who live before thee, and then, mentioning the martyrs in particular, he preſently adds, among theſe may I be received before thee this day; that this doctrine was ſo univerſally maintained by the church afterwards, that in moſt of the antient liturgies (wherein it was not fit that any diſputed problem ſhould have place) ſhe makes public profeſſion of it; and that, in thoſe very liturgies, the place and receptacle of the ſpirits of juſt men deceaſed is uſually ſtiled a the Region of the Living, the Region of the Godly, and the Boſom of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, and of all thoſe, that have pleaſed God, and obeyed his will, from the beginning of the world.

From univerſal conſent.

NAY more, had we leiſure to gratify the curious, we might bring in a large cloud of witneſſes from the heathen world, and make it appear that the ſubſiſtence of the ſoul of man, after the death of his body, was a tradition generally, we may ſay, univerſally received, not only in the civilized, but even in the moſt barbarous nations we read of; that in the Eaſt, their antient prieſts and wiſe men, the Brachmans, b had ſeveral mythological accounts, like thoſe of Plato, of the immortality of the ſoul, the judicatures of Hades, and other matters of the like nature; that in the Weſt, the Gauls and Britons were taught by their maſters the Druids, c that the ſouls of men did not die, but paſſed from one to another, by which opinion they were excited to

* Heb. xii. 23. x 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20. y Chap. vi. 9, 10. z Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. Lib. IV. c. xv. a Vid. Conſtit. Apoſt. Lib. VIII. c. xli. b Strabo, Lib. c Cæſ. de Bell. Gall. Lib. VI.

, and an uncommon contempt of death. That in the rth, ſome of the Thracians, particularly the Getæ, ran un-ntedly upon death, by virtue of this perſuaſion, [d] either that ſouls of deceaſed men returned into bodies again, or that, ey did not, they were not extinguiſhed, but went into ſome y happy place; that in the South, the Angilæ, a people of ica, thought the ghoſts of men inferior gods, [e] by whom y ſwear, to whom they pray, and conſult, upon all occa-s, by lying down on their tombs, and ſo, whatever they am, they account an oracular reſponſe; and that, if we look o that part of the world, which for ſo many ages lay undiſ-ered, in [f] China, Peru, and Mexico, as well as in Braſil, nada, Virginia, &c. the people, though ſevered from the of the world by the vaſt ocean, and having no intercourſe h any civilized nation perhaps for many ages, all agreed in ſame belief of the ſouls immortality. So that, conſidering diſtance and remoteneſs of the ſeveral parts of the world, the variety of mens tempers, and manner of education, we y be allowed to conclude with Tully, that flower of Roman quence and philoſophy both, [g] as this opinion is planted in by nature, THAT THERE IS A GOD, ſo by the conſent of all ions (and the conſent of nations is the voice of nature) we ieve that ſouls exiſt after the body.

TULLY indeed, by a due conſideration of the powers and erations of the ſoul, brought himſelf to a full perſuaſion of immortality. " Many think, [h] ſays he, that the eternity of ſouls is incredible, becauſe they cannot comprehend the eſſence and qualities of a ſeparated ſpirit; but can they, let me aſk them, define what a ſoul is, even when in the body, of what form it is, what its dimenſions are, or what is the place of its abode? For my own part, when I ſeriouſly reflect up-on the nature of the ſoul, it ſeems to me to be much more difficult and obſcure to know what it is, whilſt it is in con-junction with the body, than to underſtand it when it quits its lodging, wherein it now ſojourns, and takes it flight homewards to heaven, the place of its conſtant habitation; " for,

From the qualities of the ſoul.

[d] Pomp. Mela. Lib. II. [e] Ibid. Lib. I. [f] Vid. Mendoza de Regno Chinæ, ſta. Lerius Navigat. Benzo Hiſt. Nov. Orbis, Harriot Virg. Ranwolf's vels, &c. Lerius tells us of a very barbarous people in Braſil, among om he lived for ſome time, and calls them Joupinamboult, who are ſaid by e authors (but not upon ſufficient grounds I think) to have diſbelieved the ng of a God, and yet theſe people had firm perſuaſions of the immortality he ſoul. For their opinion was, that the ſouls of the virtuous, *i. e.* of thoſe o have valiantly defended their country, for this ſeems to be the only virtue ich they admire, do, preſently after death, fly beyond certain very high untains, and there are gathered to their fathers and grandfathers, and live leaſant gardens, with all manner of delights; but that the ſouls of cowardly unactive men, and thoſe who do nothing for their country, are carried to gman, ſo they call the devil, and live with him in perpetual torments. [g] Ut os eſſe natura opinamur, ſic permanere animos arbitramur conſenſu natio-m omnium; conſenſus autem naturæ vox eſt. Cicero Tuſcal. Queſt. Tuſcal. Q. Lib. I. paſſim.

" for, if we cannot understand that which we never saw, we m
" as well disown all knowledge of God, as of a separated so
" Whatever therefore that thing be which perceives, whi
" understands, which wills, which remembers, which is alwa
" vigorous and active in us, it must needs be celestial and divi
" and therefore eternal: for we can form no other notion
" God, but that he is a Mind abstracted from all material co
" cretion, understanding all things, moving all things, and
" whose duration there can be no end. Since then the celer
" of the thoughts of the soul, its memory of things pa
" and its foresight of things to come are wonderful; since
" arts and sciences, and other inventions are so many; it is im
" possible that the nature which comprehends such excelle
" things, should be mortal. The life of the soul consists in
" activity and thought, which are inseparable from its existenc
" and therefore being void of all mixture and allay, and co
" taining nothing heterogeneous to itself, it must be incapable
" dissolution." If then the soul of man be of so excellent make, and of so excellent a nature, we cannot, without derog tion to its great Creator, suppose that it was made for a fe days only, and shall not survive the body: especially consideri that how great soever its faculties be, [i] it does not, in this lif attain to a full improvement of them; that its operations a exertments are weak and deficient, and have not arrived to the consummation; that truth and goodness, which are its prop nourishment, are not taken in here with that full gust and rel which the soul is capable of; that the mind, in short, is recep tive of more knowledge, the will of more regularity, and th affections of more zeal and fervency than they have at presen and that these attainments therefore are to be the acquisitions another life.

Its desire of happiness.

[k] WHOM have I in heaven but thee? And there is none up earth that I desire besides thee, is a reflection of the Psalmist naturally arising from the consideration of the emptiness of worldly enjoyments; and therefore, [l] since God has implante in mens minds an eager desire of happiness (as we may all per ceive by our shifting the scene so often) and yet has put no c pacity in things here below to answer it (as our heart will te us, whenever we consider, how by reason either of their offen sive mixtures, or necessary decays that leave the soul lean a pining, in the midst of their enjoyments) as God certainly mad nothing in vain, this is a demonstration that he designed us fo another life, where we shall have a more perfect fruition of th fountain of all bliss, and where he intends to fill up the measur of our desires, and to be himself the delight we so much lon for. And indeed, when we consider farther, [m] that God h ma

Its relation to God.

i Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. k Psal. lxxiii. 25. l Young's Ser mons, Vol. I. m Martin on Natural Religion.

de man with a design that he should love, and fear, and wor- him; that he has given him a soul capable of knowing him, reflecting upon his infinite perfections; that he makes him- understood to him in a language known only to God and soul, the language of fear and hope, of fear, to restrain the ies of his passions, and of hope, to encourage him to a regu- performance of his duty; it is impossible to join all these to- her, and make them consistent, without the supposition of an mortality. For if, after we have experienced the joy and solation which the soul receives in its communion with God; , after we have tasted the heavenly gift, as the apostle ex- sses it, and have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost; if, er we have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, this joy and consolation must be lost to eternity (as it necessarily must, if the soul dies with the bo-) then are we of all creatures the most miserable. The con- ion of a brute, which has had no sense of these spiritual com- ts, but enjoyed such delights as are proportioned to its nature, more eligible than that of man, whom death confounds with beasts that perish. Beasts have no restraint put upon their petites, which man, upon the prospect of a future eternity, obliged to bring himself under: [o] they feel no inward re- baches for transgressing the bounds of their duty, and the ws of their nature: they have no uneasy presages of a future koning, wherein the pleasures they now taste must be account- for; and none of their satisfactions are impaired by the fear losing them, or by the dreadful apprehensions of death, which ke the natural man all his life-time, as the apostle speaks, ject unto bondage. In a word, they have no concern for at is past, no uneasy expectations of what is to come, but ever tied down to the present moment, and the present en- yment, and in that they are vigorously and totally employed; hereas man, the lord of this lower creation, to whom all these eatures bow and obey, by the very use of his reason, is sub- ted to these inconveniencies, and debarred from these gratifi- ions; is obliged to deny himself, and keep in his appetites, d run through a course of severe discipline, all to fit and epare his soul for heaven; and yet, if, when his body dies, his l is involved in the common ruin, what shall we think of wisdom and goodness of God, in thus forming, thus ap- inting him?

THAT we have a natural desire of immortality implanted in , is manifest from [p] all the monumental things we see men do; m the structures and buildings, the statues and images, the mbs and sepulchres, they erect, the books and writings they blish, and the great and hazardous exploits they engage in, for

Its desire of immortality.

n Heb. vi. 4, 5. o Bishop Atterbury's Sermons, Vol. I. p Edwards's Body Divinity, Vol. I.

for the ſake of fame. [q] Now every deſire ſuppoſes a natural capacity in the ſubject, wherein it reſides; and therefore, ſince the ſoul deſires immortality, it muſt be capable of immortality, and withal perceive that it is ſo. But how can it perceive itſelf capable of immortality, if in its own nature it finds not a certain fund of immortality, which makes this deſire in it ſo lively, ſo conſtant, ſo univerſal? It feels within itſelf, I ſay, that it does not die with the body; and, for this reaſon, by its actions it aims at a life to come, and by its deſires anticipates an immortality, which places it above the reach and power of death, when the body yields to it, and lives no longer: for ſuch is the ſenſe of the great Roman orator, in a book which he wrote when himſelf was going off the ſtage of life, that [r] if mens ſouls were not to be poſſeſſed of an immortal exiſtence in ANOTHER STATE, they would not, IN THIS, enterpriſe ſo great and noble things, and aſpire ſo naturally aftter immortal renown.

Its apprehenſion of futurity.

ONCE more we perceive in ourſelves the conſciouſneſs of guilt, and an uneaſy concern at the proſpect of things to come: but whence ſhould this ariſe, if the ſoul ſees not an immortality beyond this life, from whence it is impoſſible for her to withdraw? If ſhe could be aſſured of not ſurviving the body, her fears would terminate with her life, and every day decreaſe, the nearer ſhe approached that period: whereas the very contrary is experimentally true. The greater the diſtance is, wherein the wicked man looks upon death, and the longer he thinks he has to live, the leſs his conſcience is terrified: becauſe the idea of his ſoul's immortality is at preſent too remote, and beheld, as it were, in miniature only; whereas, when life decays, and draws near to a concluſion, the immortality then appearing near, and preſenting itſelf in full view to the ſoul, the conſcience is alarmed; its ſtings are redoubled, and while the unhappy creature has any thought left, a dreadful futurity, which he ſees beyond his approaching death, and is a thouſand times worſe than death itſelf, rends his ſoul. But now what has his ſoul to fear, if it does not ſurvive his body? Or why is it moſt of all concerned, when the time of its deliverance is at hand, if ſo be, when the body is deſtroyed, it reſolves into nothing, and vaniſhes into the ſoft air? In a word, let men ſhift the remembrance of it as much as they pleaſe, yet, at one time or other, they muſt believe the immortality of the ſoul, becauſe they find it in their conſcience. But now how came it to be placed there, and to be placed there ſo ſtedfaſtly that it cannot be moved? [s] If it were only education, we might forget it, as we forget abundance of things that are the effect of education; but this is ſo far from being forgotten, that conſcience retains it, even to the laſt breath: and therefore we may conclude, that nature, or to ſpeak more properly, that God himſelf has imprinted

q Martin on Natural Religion. r Tully de Senectute. s Martin, ibid.

rinted this perſuaſion in us, and imprinted it ſo indelibly, that ne muſt deſtroy the very ſubſtance of the ſoul, and reduce it nothing, before one can extirpate the notion of its immortality om the conſcience. Now, as we may reaſonably preſume, at this notion of immortality, which he hath implanted in us, not chimerical and deluſory, we muſt be led to conclude, even om the light of reaſon, that both the nature of our ſouls, nd the ſtate which he hath provided for them in the other orld is ſuch as anſwer the different forebodings of our minds, ccording to our different behaviour in this. But we have ſſerted our point before from better authority; and ſhall now roceed to evince,

II. THAT in its ſeparate ſtate the ſoul does not ſleep and ecome inſenſible till the reſurrection-day, but is immediately dmitted into an happy or miſerable condition, according as the an has behaved in his paſt life. Whether the Jews of old ad any juſt and adequate notion of the ſtate of ſeparated ſouls; hether they believed that they had different abodes, according o their different qualities, where they continued to think, and erceive, and be differently affected with joy or grief, with leaſure or pain, according to their different diſpoſitions and lotments; or, that they were all thrown into one common eceptacle, where they fell into a kind of lethargy, and utter nſenſibility till the general reſurrection; has been a matter of me debate among the learned. [t] The practice of necro-ancy, or conſulting with the dead, which was certainly a anch of the antient magic, and [u] uſed by Saul in the caſe of amuel; the prayer of Elijah, when raiſing the widow's ſon to fe, [x] O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's ſoul come to him again; and that declaration of God to Moſes at the uſh, * I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and he God of Jacob, as our Saviour has expounded it, might give hem to underſtand that the ſoul, after death, was not annihilat-d, but had, ſome where or other, exiſtence in its ſeparate ſtate; et, when we conſider the deſcription which holy Job, the great ſſertor of the reſurrection, gives of the ſtate of the dead; Man dieth and waſteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghoſt, nd where is he? Man lieth down, and riſeth not till the hea-ens be no more; they ſhall not awake, nor be raiſed out of their leep: when we conſider what ſentiments the royal Pſalmiſt, ddreſſing himſelf to God, has diſcovered of this matter; In death there is no remembrance of thee, and in the grave who ſhall give thee thanks? For [z] the dead praiſe not the Lord, either any that go down into ſilence: when we conſider the riting of good Hezekiah, king of Judah, or the form of his hankſgiving to God for his recovery from a fit of ſickneſs; [b] the

Whether the Jews had right notions of the ſeparate ſtate of the ſoul.

t Whiſton's Sermons. u 1 Sam. xxviii. 7. x 1 Kings xvii. 21. * Exod. iii 6.
Job xiv 10, 12. z Pſal vi 5. a Ibid. cxv. 17.

[b] The grave cannot praiſe thee, death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down to the pit cannot hope for thy truth: the living, the living, he ſhall praiſe thee, as I do this day; and thereupon the advice of the wiſe king Solomon, [c] whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave, whither thou goeſt: when we conſider theſe, and ſeveral other paſſages of the like import, I ſay, we can hardly forbear believing that the Jews of old, even the beſt and wiſeſt of them, [d] looked upon the interval between their death and reſurrection, as a ſtate of perfect oblivion and inactivity; and that their hopes and fears, as to the other world, had generally reſpect to the reſurrection only, and to thoſe different everlaſting ſtates that were to ſucceed. It is the glory and excellence of the goſpel therefore that has brought light into this [e] land of darkneſs, as darkneſs itſelf, according to Job's expreſſion, and thereby diſcovered, not only what we are to be to all eternity, but what we are to be likewiſe, the very moment we ſtep out of the body.

The chriſtian doctrine in this particular.

OUR bleſſed Saviour, [f] who came from above, and therefore underſtood the whole œconomy of the bright and heavenly regions, and by virtue of his omniſcient and omnipreſent Deity, as perfectly knew the miſerable ſtate of thoſe ſpirits, who dwell in the oppoſite regions of darkneſs, in the parable of the rich man and the beggar, has given us a lively deſcription of both theſe ſtates: [g] And it came to paſs, that the beggar died, and was carried into Abraham's boſom; the rich man alſo died, and was buried, and in hell, in *hades*, he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and ſeeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his boſom; and he cried, and ſaid, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and ſend Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham ſaid, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receiveds thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. [h] That all this happineſs of the poor, and the miſery of the rich man was in the intermediate ſtate, before the general reſurrection, ſeems evident, not only from the ſeries of the hiſtory, but from the circumſtances likewiſe of the rich man's deſire, that a meſſage might be ſent to his five ſurviving brethren, in order to their converſion: and therefore our Saviour's deſign in this parable

b Iſa. xxxviii. 18, 19. c Eccleſ. ix. 10. d The author we laſt quoted is of opinion, that the ſouls of men departed under the times of the Old Teſtament, did really ſleep, or at leaſt enjoy a very inconſiderable ſhare of life and ſenſation till our Saviour's coming; nay, perhaps till his deſcent into hades, among the ſouls of the dead, between the time of his death and his reſurrection. But if this deſcent into hades is to be taken in any other ſenſe than what he imagines, as we conceive it may (ſee page 18, &c.) all his conjecture will prove groundleſs. e Job. x. 22. f Bull's Sermons, Vol. I. g Luke xvi 22, &c. h Whiſton's Sermons.

parable muſt have been, to repreſent the good, as very happy, and the bad, as very miſerable, in the intermediate ſtate, before their reſurrection. It is acknowledged indeed [i] that this is but a parable, and accordingly, ſeveral things in it are parabolically expreſſed: but though every thing in a parable be not argumentative, yet all divines agree, that the main ſcope and intendment of it is, which, in this, is to ſhew what becomes of the ſouls of good and bad men after death.

WHILE the penitent thief was hanging on the croſs, his petition to our Lord was only that he would [k] remember him, when he came into his kingdom, *i. e.* when he came, in his royal power and majeſty, to judge the world in the laſt day; but our Saviour grants him more than he aſked; Verily, I ſay unto thee, to-day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe. Paradiſe among the Jews does primarily ſignify the Garden of Eden, that bleſſed garden, wherein Adam, in his ſtate of innocence, dwelt; and becauſe it was a very delightful place, they uſed, by the word, to repreſent the ſtate and abode of good ſouls, ſeparated from their bodies, and waiting for their reſurrection. So that our Saviour's meaning, in this promiſe to the penitent thief muſt be, that he ſhould preſently, after his death, enter with him into that place of bliſs and happineſs which the ſouls of the righteous inhabit. But now, why ſhould our Saviour have made him this promiſe had his ſoul been to become incapable of the joys and felicities of the place? Paradiſe could have been no Paradiſe to him, had he been to fall into a deep ſleep as ſoon as he came thither, and ſo loſe the ſenſe and faculty of taſting and perceiving the pleaſures of it.

NEXT to our bleſſed Saviour, St Paul, who, as himſelf tells us, was caught up, not only into heaven, but into Paradiſe likewiſe, is the beſt able to give us an account of the ſtate of the ſouls dwelling there; and he tells that it was ſo far from being a place of darkneſs and obſcurity, ſilence and oblivion, where its inhabitants are all in a profound ſleep; that, on the contrary, it is a moſt glorious place, full of light and raviſhing viſion; a place where myſteries are to be learned far ſurpaſſing the reach of frail mortals, and where himſelf [l] heard, *arrheta rhemata*, words, or rather things, unſpeakable, ſuch as were not lawful, or rather not poſſible, for man to utter. From his own knowledge and experience of the place therefore, he tells the Philippians, that [m] he was in a ſtrait between two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which was far better, though to abide in the fleſh, was more needful to them: but how could he think it ſo much better to depart from the body, than to remain in it, if, upon his departure, he was to be deprived of all ſenſe, and to ſink into a lethargy, and utter oblivion? To diſcharge faithfully the apoſtolic office; to be an inſtrument of doing good,

of

[i] Bull's Sermons. Vol. I. [k] Luke xxiii. 42, 43 [l] 2 Cor. xii. 4. [m] Phil. i. 23, 24.

of ſaving ſouls, of converting nations; and himſelf to enjoy, all along, the comforts of his good deeds, the favour of God, and the ſweet conſolation [n] of a conſcience void of offence towards God, and towards man, is certainly a more eligible thing than to enter into a ſtate where one common gulph of inſenſibility ſwallows up good and bad ſouls alike: and therefore if we will allow the report of an apoſtle, who himſelf had been in the place, though [o] whether in the body, or out of the body, he could not tell, together with the report of our Saviour, who himſelf knew the place, to have any weight and authority in this caſe, we cannot but agree in this ſentiment, viz. [p] That the ſouls of men do not only ſubſiſt after the death of their bodies, but that they are alſo ſenſible of pleaſure or pain, of joy or ſorrow, in that ſeparate ſtate; the wicked being tormented at preſent with a piercing remorſe for what is paſſed, and expecting far more dreadful vengeance to befal them; and the good, on the other hand, being refreſhed with the peace and ſatisfaction of a good conſcience, and yet joyfully waiting for a greater happineſs, at the reſurrection. Which brings us to the other part of this argument, viz.

Different opinions concerning the ſoul's middle ſtate.

III. THAT the ſoul's happineſs or miſery, in this intermediate ſtate, is partial only, and not ſo perfect and complete as it will be, after its re-union with the body. [q] It is an opinion pretty generally received, that the ſouls of the ſaints, after their departure out of the body, are immediately, by the holy angels, conveyed into the higheſt heavens, and ſo admitted into the glorious preſence of God, and of his Son Jeſus Chriſt; and that they there enjoy the ſame happineſs and glory which they ſhall enjoy after the reſurrection of the body; the ſame, not only in ſubſtance, but in degree, barely with this one difference, that their bodies are not as yet raiſed from the dead, and re-united to their ſouls. The very contrary to this they affirm to be the fate of wicked ſouls: and, to give their opinion the better countenance, [r] they ſuppoſe a particular judgment, previous to the ſoul's conſignment either to happineſs or miſery, *i. e.* "They "ſuppoſe that every particular ſoul, as ſoon as it departs from "the body, undergoes ſuch a trial before the tribunal of God, "as the whole world will undergo at the laſt day; has every "thought, and word, and work inquired into, and ſentence "paſſed upon it to the very ſame rewards and puniſhments "which the final judgment ſhall decree."

That its happineſs or miſery is imperfect.

THERE is another opinion, ſomewhat different to this, not ſo popular indeed, but what ſeems more conſonant to the word of God; and that is, that the happineſs or miſery of departed ſouls is, in the degree of it, leſs perfect before than it ſhall be after the reſurrection. [s] This opinion makes the happineſs of the

n Acts xxiv. 16. o 2 Cor. xii. 3. p Bull's Sermons, Vol. I. q Biſhop Smalridge's Sermons. r Lucas's Sermons, Vol. I. s Biſhop Smalridge, ibid.

e righteous, before the resurrection, to consist chiefly in these rticulars; that, by death, they are freed from all those cares, nd troubles, and dangers, all those trials and temptations, all hose doubts and anxieties, all that grief, and sorrow, and nguish, which they are perpetually disturbed and tormented ith in this mortal life, and, as soon as released from their bo-ies, enjoy a perfect quiet and ease; that they are not only eed from misery, but, together with their bodies, put off all hose defilements of sin which they had contracted by their welling in them, and have the graces wherewith they took care o adorn themselves while they were upon earth, by death very uch improved, and their happiness thereby proportionably ugmented; and that, having now a nearer and more distinct iew of that glory which is reserved for them till the last day, he sure and certain prospect of it does vastly add to their pre-ent joy and satisfaction. For if the good and faithful servants f God are said [t] to rejoice, even in this world, with joy un-peakable, and full of glory, as oft as they fix their eyes upon hat distant reward which they hope for, when Christ shall come n glory to recompense his saints; then undoubtedly the joy which this prospect will afford them, when by death it is brought earer to them, when they see it more clearly, when they have o doubts of compassing it, when they have an earnest and ledge of it, in that tranquillity which they actually are possessed f, must be still more ravishing and inconceivable.

On the contrary, this opinion supposes that by death the wicked are removed from all the pleasures and gay amusements f the world, from all the idols they were once so fond of, rom that riot and excess, that lewd and intemperate company which was heretofore their chief delight; and that finding them-elves naked spirits, stripped of every thing they love, and expos-ed to every thing they hate, with their passions worrying them, nd conscience, [u] like an armed man, let loose upon them, by he convictions they feel within, as the terrible day of the Lord pproaches, they perceive that there remaineth nothing * but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation to devour them. Now these different states of departed souls, though they be much superior to the happiness or misery which those who are most happy or miserable in this world do enjoy, do yet fall much short of that bliss or woe which these souls shall enjoy or suffer after the resurrection; and conse-quently, what is the intermediate state between death and judg-ment, as we shall now endeavour to make appear, is not designed to be the consummation of the happiness or misery of our im-mortal souls.

[x] A certain nobleman, says our Lord, went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return; and he called

This proved from scripture.

t 1 Pet. i. 8. u Prov. vi. 11. * Heb. x. 27. x Luke xix. 12, &c.

called his ten ſervants, and delivered them ten pounds, and ſaid unto them, Occupy till I come. And it came to paſs, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he ordered theſe ſervants to be called unto him, to reward the diligent, and puniſh the ſlothful; and afterwards commanded his [y] enemies to be ſlain. Now it is too obvious to need any explanation, that by the return in the parable is meant Chriſt's ſecond coming into the world, to judge it, and to reward every one according to their works: and though, as we ſaid before, there is no arguing from diſcourſes of this nature any farther than their main drift and deſign leads us; yet, ſince our Saviour ſpake this parable, [z] becauſe, upon his approach to Jeruſalem, the people thought that the kingdom of God ſhould immediately appear, we cannot but infer, that this nobleman's not rewarding his ſervants, whom he had entruſted with the management of his money, and not puniſhing his enemies, who had retracted their obedience to him, until his return, was intended to denote a purpoſe in the divine wiſdom, to delay the appointed time of mens final reward until Chriſt ſhall return from heaven [a] in the glory of his Father, and with the holy angels, in order to diſpenſe it.

When St Peter put the queſtion to his Lord, what reward he and the reſt of the apoſtles ſhould have who had forſaken their all in this world to follow him, and be his diſciples; he received this gracious anſwer; [b] Verily, I ſay unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man ſhall ſit on the throne of his glory, ye ſhall ſit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael. [c] By the regeneration here ſpoken of, we muſt not underſtand the benefit we receive by baptiſm, nor yet that which is the effect of God's ſanctifying Spirit upon our minds, but our reſurrection only, which will be indeed a *paliggeneſia*, a regeneration, or ſecond generation of men to life, after that life which they had in their firſt generation is extinguiſhed; and if ſo, then does our Saviour in this paſſage inform us, that the dead in Chriſt are not to expect their final reward until the reſurrection; ſince the apoſtles themſelves, thoſe great champions of the chriſtian cauſe, are ordered to wait for the full recompence of their labour, and ſuffering, and ſelf-denial (though their recompence, when it comes, will be more eminently great than others) till the arrival of that appointed period. St Paul therefore, looking backwards upon his paſt conflicts, and forwards upon his future reward, tells us the

y Luke xix. 27. z Ibid. ver. 11. a Matth. xvi. 27. b Matth. xix. 28. Our tranſlators have manifeſtly miſpointed this text. For they refer the words in the generation to that which went before thus: Ye have followed me in the regeneration; whereas they ſhould be joined to the following words, thus: Ye, which have followed me, *en te paliggeneſia*, in the regeneration, when the Son of man ſhall ſit upon the throne of his glory. c Biſhop Bull's Sermons, Vol. I.

he time when he was to expect it: [d] I have fought a good ight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; hence- orth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which he Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day, and ot to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing. For the crown of righteousness was not then to be set upon t Paul's head, when he had just finished his course, but was rom that time to be laid up for him; it was not to be given till hat day, the great day of judgment; not to be given him sepa- ately, but, at the same time, to him, and to all them who, when the judge should come, loved his appearance. And for his reason it is that the saints of God are directed [f] to look for hat blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, nd our Saviour Jesus Christ. The blessed hope is the blessed- ess hoped for; and therefore since the apostle joins it with the ppearance of our Lord, he plainly enough intimates that the erfect bliss we hope for will not be bestowed upon us till the oming of our Lord. But now, if after the appearance of Christ, there shall be no other accession to the happiness of de- arted saints, but what arises from the glorification of their bodies; , even before his appearance, their souls are already possessed of ll the happiness whereof they are capable, and whereunto they re, by the merits of Christ, entitled; there can be no sufficient eason given why they should be said to expect the appearance f Christ, in order to be made partakers of that blessedness they ope for.

It would be endless to multiply passages to this purpose, and herefore to be short. When St Peter tells us that [z] our in- eritance is reserved in heaven for us; that [a] our praise, and onour, and glory are to commence at the appearing of Jesus hrist; and therefore admonishes us [b] to hope to the end for he grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelations of esus Christ: when St John declares, [c] Beloved, now are we he sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, ut we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; or we shall see him as he is: when in the Revelation, he repre- nts the souls under the altar, complaining of the delay of the ay of judgment, and that [d] it was said to them, that they should est yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and heir brethren, that should be killed, as they were, should be ulfilled: and lastly, when our blessed Saviour informs us, that ur feeding the hungry, and cloathing the naked, and visiting he sick, &c. though [e] actions, which he himself charges to his wn account, will not receive their full payment and recom- ence [f] till the resurrection of the just; nor the contrary usage

d 2 Tim. iv. 7. e Bishop Smalridge's Sermons. f Tit. ii. 13. z 1 Pet. i. 4. bid. ver. 7. b Ibid. ver. 13. c 1 John iii. 2. d Rev. vi. 11. e Matth. v. 42. f Luke xiv. 14.

meet with its puniſhment till that period; we cannot but conclude that the happineſs and miſery of man (though in ſome meaſure it commences now) does not receive its conſummation and accompliſhment till that day: for, in all common conſtruction, there muſt be ſomething in the ſolemnity of the ſentence: [g] Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, that puts the righteous in poſſeſſion of what they did not enjoy before; and ſomething in [h] Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, that condemns the wicked to what they did not ſuffer before.

The ſum of the whole argument.

THE amount of the whole then is this,—[i] That ſome departed ſouls are in a ſtate of happineſs, ſome in a ſtate of miſery; that according to their different demeanor in this mortal life, their condition is different, upon their tranſlation into another world: that they do not, in the interval between their being ſeparated from the body by death, and re-united to it at the reſurrection, ſleep a profound ſleep, void of all action and perception, deſtitute of life, and thought, inſenſible of pleaſure and pain, is evident enough from ſeveral paſſages in holy writ: but that theſe different ſtates are allotted them by any formal ſentence, paſſed upon them immediately after their death; that their actions are then weighed and examined by the judge of heaven and earth, and judgment pronounced upon them ſeverally, according to the good or evil they have done; that the ſtate of happineſs or miſery, which they are in from their departure out of the world, is final, and the ſame, both in kind and degree, to which they ſhall be judged to all eternity; that the ſouls of the righteous ſhall, at the day of judgment, be admitted to the participation of no other, or greater bliſs, than what they before enjoyed, nor the ſouls of the wicked condemned to endure no other, or ſorer torments, than what they before felt; is what we have no authority from the word of God to affirm, and what we have good grounds, we preſume, from the plain declarations thereof, to deny.

No particular judgment before the reſurrection.

For when we are told that [k] we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad; and therefore are cautioned [l] to judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts, and then ſhall every man have praiſe, or diſpraiſe of God; [m] to what purpoſe, may we ſay, is there a particular judgment, when we are ſo poſitively aſſured of a general one? Or why are the actions of men examined again, when they were examined once before? The works of darkneſs, and the thoughts of mens hearts, how can they be ſaid to be revealed, when they were particularly laid open

g Matth. xxv. 34. h Ibid. ver. 41. i Biſhop Smalridge's Sermons.
k 2 Cor. v. 10. l 1 Cor. iv. 5. m Lucas's Sermons, Vol. I.

en before? And how can it be called a Day of Retribution, hen it is but adjudging men to the ſame places, to the ſame wards and puniſhments, which were judicially aſſigned them fore?

"BUT if there be no particular judgment, how ſhall we determine the fate of each ſoul, as ſoon as it has left the body? And by what characters ſhall we know to which of the regions it belongs?" [n] In this life indeed the holy and unholy ve in the ſame world, have the ſame ſnares and temptations, e ſame ſenſes and appetites, in ſhort, the ſame body that preſſes wn the virtuous attempts of the one, and diverts the ſenſe d miſery of the other; but as ſoon as death has diſſolved the nion with the body, then, and not till then, will moſt plainly pear their different ſtates; the one, by a neceſſity of nature, ill aſcend to the regions of bliſs and holineſs, and the other, by like fatal neceſſity, will ſink into the pit of darkneſs and miſery. or if [r] the Spirit of God, even in this life, beareth witneſs ith our ſpirit, that we are the children of God, how eaſy is to conceive, that God may make this judgment of his eternal pirit brighter and ſtronger upon a good ſoul, when out of the dy? And if conſcience is ſo apt to miſbode and condemn the icked now, it is no difficulty to imagine, how it may then be led with greater and more intolerable deſpair, partly from od's abandoning it intirely; partly from a clearer manifeſtaon of his wrath and diſpleaſure againſt it; and partly from its eing poſſeſſed and invaded by ſome evil ſpirits: for, as good ngels, which miniſter to holy ſouls when in the body, will aturally reſort, and miniſter to them, when they come out of ; ſo is there little reaſon to doubt but that the evil ſpirits hich tempted and inflamed wicked ſouls in this life, will be eady to ſeize and carry away the helpleſs wretches, as ſoon as ey ſtep into another.

The diſtinction that may be made between ſeparate ſouls.

THUS we think we have ſaid enough, both to reſcue the departed ſouls of men from a ſtate of death and inſenſibility, and, ll the reſurrection, to put a ſufficient difference between the ondition of thoſe who die in the Lord, and of thoſe who die n their ſins: but that the ſouls of thoſe, who die in a ſtate of nmity with God, can by any after-acts of repentance reconcile hemſelves to him; or that departed ſouls can, by any methods f purgation in another world, be cleared from the defilements hich they contracted in this, and by ſuch purifying, be rendered more fit objects of God's mercy, and more worthy to be reeived into the kingdom of heaven, are poſitions which we nounce and diſclaim; ſuch as have been grafted upon this doctrine of departed ſpirits for very bad purpoſes; ſuch as have no countenance

n Whiſton's Sermons. r Lucas's Sermons, Vol. I.

countenance, no authority from ſcripture; and ſuch as contradict the declared ſentiments of the greateſt men in the church, for at leaſt the firſt three hundred years.

The place of no ſignification to their happineſs or miſery.

[t] WHETHER the place of departed ſouls is above, within, or beneath the higheſt heavens; whether there is one common receptacle

[s] St Clement, who lived in the apoſtolic age, in his ſecond epiſtle to the Corinthians (Chap. viii.) ſeems profeſſedly to oppoſe the fiction of purgatory. Whilſt we are upon earth, ſays he, let us repent; for we are as clay in the hand of the artificer: as therefore the potter, if he makes a veſſel, and finds it awry, or broken in his hands, may again faſhion it anew; but if, beforehand, he hath thrown it into the fiery furnace, there is no more help for it, he cannot make it better: ſo alſo we, as long as we are in the world, may repent from the whole heart of the evils we have done in the fleſh, that we may be ſaved of the Lord, whilſt we have time of repentance; but after we have left this world, we can no longer confeſs or repent. Nothing, we think, can reconcile this divinity to the Romiſh purgatory; and to ſhew that this was the doctrine of the church till after the third century, we ſhall produce a paſſage out of the author of the Queſtions and Anſwers to the Orthodox, who, in his anſwer to the 75th queſtion, having ſaid, that in this life there is no difference between the righteous and the wicked, as to worldly concerns, immediately adds, but after death the righteous preſently are ſeparated from the unrighteous; for they are carried by angels into their meet places. The ſouls of the righteous are conveyed into Paradiſe, where they enjoy the converſation and ſight of angels, and archangels, and of our Saviour Chriſt alſo, by way of viſion: according to what is ſaid, when we are abſent from the body, we are preſent with the Lord: but the ſouls of the unrighteous are carried into the infernal regions, &c. and they (*i. e.* both ſorts of ſouls) are kept in their meet places till the day of the reſurrection and recompence. From whence it is manifeſt that the primitive fathers were ſtrangers to the *limbus patrum*, the *limbus infantum*, and purgatory; for they were acquainted with no more than two places or receptacles for departed ſouls. If then we inquire into the riſe and growth of the doctrine of purgatory in the chriſtian church, we ſhall plainly find it to be this. About the middle of the third century, Origen, among other Platonic conceits of his, vended this, that all the faithful (the apoſtles themſelves not excepted) ſhall, at the day of judgment, paſs through a purgatory-fire, the fire of the great conflagration, which they ſhall endure, for a longer or ſhorter time, according as their imperfections required a greater or leſs purgation: and in this conceit, directly contrary to many expreſs texts of ſcripture, he was followed, for the greateſt of his name, by ſome other great men in the church of God. Afterwards, about the end of the fourth, or the beginning of the fifth century, St Auſtin began to doubt whether this imagined purgation was not to be made in the interval between death and the reſurrection, at leaſt, as to the ſouls of the more perfect chriſtians. Towards the end of the fifth century, Pope Gregory, a man remarkably ſuperſtitious, undertook dogmatically to aſſert the problem, and ſet himſelf, with all his might, to prove it; but chiefly from idle ſtories of apparitions of ſouls, coming out of purgatory. Four hundred years after this, Pope John the XVIIIth (or, as ſome ſay, the XIXth) inſtituted an holy-day, wherein he ſeverely required all men to pray for the ſouls in purgatory; as if the catholic church, before him, had been deficient in their charity, and forgotten the miſerable ſouls in that place of torment. At length, the council of Florence (in the year 1439) turned this figment into an article of faith, which the Roman clergy, for the gain, more than the godlineſs of it, ſtrenuouſly inculcate and maintain. Bull's Sermons, Vol. I.

[t] St Clement, in the beginning of his epiſtle, calls the receptacle of pious ſouls the Holy Place, but not the moſt holy; whereby he alludes to the temple of Jeruſalem, which (at the time of his writing it) was yet ſtanding, and wherein there was the ſanctuary, or holy place, and within it the holy of holies, both figures of the heavenly things: and therefore he ſeems to have thought that the region of the godly deceaſed was a part of the heavenly regions, as the ſanctuary was a part of the temple, and near to the higheſt region of the heavens, as the ſanctuary was nearer the holy of holies. Upon which account

ceptacle for the ſouls of the righteous and unrighteous, till he reſurrection; or whether, from their departure out of their odies, they dwell in ſeparate manſions, as is moſt probable; hether Abraham's boſom, where Lazarus was carried by the ngels, and hell, or rather *hades*, where the rich man was tor-ented, ſignify to us places as diſtant, as the conditions of the oor and rich man were different, or were intended only to ex-reſs to us the difference of their ſtates, without determining he ſeveral places of their abode; are ſpeculations we are no ays concerned to be inquiſitive about, while we are ſatisfied f this main truth, viz. that the righteous, in the intermediate me, between their death and the reſurrection, are in a ſtate of appineſs, and the wicked in a ſtate of miſery; for, as [u] far as ur apprehenſions of theſe matters go, a material place, cannot the leaſt contribute either to increaſe or to diminiſh the hap-neſs or miſery of an immaterial ſpirit. Spirits that are diveſt-d of fleſh and blood, wherever they are, carry heaven or hell ong with them. The good angels are as happy here upon arth, whilſt they are employed in the execution of God's will, whilſt they are converſant in the regions above, becauſe † they o always behold the face of God, in whoſe preſence is fulneſs f joy: Satan was no more happy, when [x] he came among the ons of God, to preſent himſelf before the Lord, than whilſt he as going to and fro, and walking up and down in the earth. he happineſs or miſery of pure ſpirits hath no relation, that e know of, to the place where they are; but the happineſs or iſery of embodied ſpirits, or of men who are made up of ſouls nd bodies, have a dependence upon the place of their abode; nd therefore we are ſure, wherever ſeparate ſouls are lodged till he reſurrection, that, after the reſurrection, righteous and icked men ſhall have places allotted them, ſuitable to their ifferent ſtates; the former ſhall be carried up to the higheſt eavens, the latter ſhall be thrown down to the nethermoſt hell; nd therefore ſeeing that theſe things ſhall be ſo, the apoſtle's ference is, [y] What manner of perſons ought we to be, in all oly converſation and godlineſs!

The influence of the doctrine of the ſoul's immortality and intermediate ſtate.

It was an obſervation of Plato long ago, that [z] no man can e truly and ſteadily religious, unleſs he firmly believes the im-ortality of the ſoul, and lives in a ſenſe of it; and, even before im, the Wiſdom of Solomon [a] hath given us a lively deſcrip-tion

count ſome of the fathers, as St Cyprian, St Ambroſe, and others, ſtuck not call the place of the ſeparate ſpirits of good men by the name of Heaven, or e Heavens; meaning thereby, not the auditum, or inmoſt apartment of aven, where the throne of the Majeſty on high is ſeated, and where the light, at is unapproachable, ſhines, but an heavenly manſion, ſomewhere near it: d by parity of reaſon, wherever we imagine hell to be placed, we may ſup-ſe that the abode of wicked ſpirits, in their ſtate of ſeparation, to be ſome-here in the confines of it. Bull's Sermons, Vol. I.

[u] Biſhop Smalridge's Sermons. † Matth. xviii. 10. [x] Job. ii. 1, 2. [y] 2 Pet. ii. [z] De Legibus. [a] Chap ii.

tion of the fatal tendency which our diſbelief of this great article has, to lead us into all manner of wickedneſs. "Our life is "ſhort and tedious, ſays the infidel, and in the death of a man "there is no remedy. For we are born at all adventure, and "we ſhall be hereafter as though we had never been; for the "breath in our noſtrils is as ſmoke, and a little ſpark, in the "moving of our heart, which being extinguiſhed, our body "ſhall turn into aſhes, and our ſpirits ſhall vaniſh as the ſoft "air: whereupon our name ſhall be forgotten in time, and no "man ſhall have our works in remembrance. Come on there-"fore, let us enjoy the good things that are preſent, and let "us ſpeedily uſe the creatures, like as in youth. Let us fill our-"ſelves with coſtly wine and ointments, and let no flower of "the ſpring paſs by us. Let us crown ourſelves with roſe-"buds before they be withered; let none of us go without his "part of voluptuouſneſs. Let us leave tokens of our joyful-"neſs in every place; for this is our portion, and our lot is "this." Thus the infidel reaſons himſelf into ſoftneſs and luxury, and riot; and in proceſs of his error, comes in a ſhort time to approve crimes, the moſt abhorrent to human nature: for thus he goes on; "Let us oppreſs the poor righteous man; "let us not ſpare the widow, nor reverence the antient grey "hairs of the aged. Let our ſtrength be the law of juſtice; "for that which is feeble, is found to be nothing worth. "Therefore let us lie in wait for the righteous, becauſe he is "not for our turn, and he is clean contrary to our doings. He "upbraideth us with our offending the law, and objecteth, to "our infamy, the tranſgreſſings of our education. Let us "therefore examine him with deſpitefulneſs and torture, that "we may know his meekneſs, and prove his patience." And indeed what conſiderations of prudence, or decency, or honour, or good report, can reſtrain him from abuſing his wealth and power to the greateſt degree of licentiouſneſs and tyranny, when he has once fortified himſelf in infidelity, and poſſeſſed his heart with this perſuaſion, that when he dies his body ſhall be turned into aſhes, and his ſpirit vaniſh as the ſoft air. But now, when a man carries always this conviction in his breaſt, that God hath not only appointed a day wherein he will judge the world, and [b] render to every man according to his deeds; to them who obey not the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh, upon every ſoul of man that doth evil; but even before that terrible time cometh, will con-ſign his immortal ſoul, the moment it leaves the body, to [c] a place of gloomineſs and deſpair, where there ſhines not the leaſt glimmering of light or comfort, where there is no company but the devil and his angels, and thoſe loſt ſouls which have been ſeduced by them; where wretched ſpirits are continually vexed

b Rom. ii. 6, 8. c Bull's Sermons, Vol. I.

t the ſad remembrance of their former ſins and follies, feel the rath of God already diſcharged upon them, and tremble at the pprehenſion of greater wrath to come; where they preſently ſte the cup of divine vengeance, and are heart-ſick to think of e time when they muſt drink up the full dregs of it: when a an is convinced of theſe truths, I ſay, they cannot but have good influence on his life, give a new turn to his thoughts nd affections, and ſome check to his wildeſt career.

If indeed there were any reſpite after death; [d] if there were ut ſome hundreds of years intermiſſion, in a ſtate of ſleep and rgetfulneſs, this were ſome little preſent comfort to the un-odly; but when, upon their departure hence, their ſtate of iſery ſhall commence; when, not only after the final judgment, ey muſt dwell with devouring fire and everlaſting burnings, ut, in the interval, be company for infernal ſpirits, and with em, be equally [e] reſerved in chains of darkneſs againſt the dgment of the great day: this conſideration is abſolutely ne-lerable, and cannot fail, one would think, of affrighting all ob-inate ſinners out of their ungodly courſes; becauſe it forewarns, nd continually ſuggeſts to their minds [f] whom they ought to ar, even him, who after he hath killed, hath immediately power caſt into hell.

On the other hand, when we are ſure and certain, not only of bleſſed reſurrection at the laſt day, but of a reception into a ery happy ſtate and place in the mean time; [g] a place, where-ver it is, of reſt, and not a ſtupid inſenſible reſt, but a reſt at-nded with a lively perception of far greater joy and delight an this whole world can afford; a place, of the beſt ſociety and mpany, where we ſhall be gathered to the ſpirits of juſt men ade perfect, and familiarly converſe with thoſe ſaints, and ex-llent perſons, whom we have heard of, and admired, and d hoſe examples we have endeavoured to imitate; a place, that the rendezvous of the holy angels of God, and which the Son God himſelf viſits, and illuſtrates with the rays of his glory; here there will be no wicked men to corrupt or offend us; devil to tempt us; no ſinful fleſh to betray us; from whence l ſorrow, becauſe all ſin, is baniſhed, and where there is no-ing but joy, and yet more joy ſtill to be expected: the belief nd conſideration of this, I ſay, cannot fail of being a ſtrong con-lation to us in the day of adverſity, and a powerful induce-ent to all virtue and godlineſs of living. [h] Were we indeed, hen we had fought the good fight, and finiſhed our courſe, wait ſome thouſands of years for a recompence to be made s; were we to paſs through a long ſtate of oblivion and in-ctivity, before we could reap any advantage by all our diligence nd labours in God's ſervice, this would be a defect in our encouragement,

d Whiſton's Sermons. e 2 Pet. ii. 4. f Luke xii. 5. g Bulls Sermons, ol. I. h Whiſton, ibid.

encouragement, and a kind of balk to our expectation; but when we are assured, by God's holy word, that such as die in the Lord, not only rest from their labours, but have the reward of their works following them immediately; that pious souls are no sooner free from this mortal body, but they find themselves with God, and their Saviour in Paradise; this, if any thing, will engage us to be [i] stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour shall, so soon, so suddenly, not be in vain in the Lord.

SECT. I.

Of the RESURRECTION of the Dead.

The doctrine of the resurrection stated by St Paul.

WHEN St Paul was brought before Festus, the Roman governor, to make his defence, for having offended the Jews, in asserting the resurrection of Jesus, whom they had crucified as a malefactor; he addresses himself to Agrippa, who was likewise a Jew, and might therefore understand the nature of the controversy between him and his adversaries better than Festus: [k] I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all those things whereof I am accused by the Jews. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers, unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God, hope to come, *i. e.* "[l] I am accused for preaching "that Jesus is risen from the dead, which is but a particular "instance of the general doctrine of the resurrection, entertained by the major part of the Jews, and which, even to the "natural notions of mankind, is not so incongruous as some may "think it: for [m] why should it be thought a thing incredible "with you, with you, O king Agrippa, and the rest, that I "speak to this day, who are Jews, and believe the scriptures, "and therefore cannot be averse to this doctrine; why should "it be thought an incredible thing that God should raise "the dead?" The apostle, in his manner of speech, seems to imply, that some people in the world thought it a thing incredible that the dead should be raised again; for this is the foundation of his question. And therefore, before we shall attempt to shew the certainty, the propriety, and the manner of the resurrection; it may not be amiss to inquire a little how far the world was acquainted with this doctrine, before the coming of our Saviour Christ.

What knowledge the heathens had of a resurrection.

* THE great argument whereby the wisest of the heathen world endeavoured to make death less terrible, if not desirable to them, was their observation of the unhappy effects which did

i 1 Cor. xv. ult. k Acts xxvi. 2. l Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. III. m Acts xxvi. 8. * Lucas's Sermons, Vol. I.

d result from the union of their ſoul and body. They per-
ived that their underſtandings were clouded, and their wills
a manner captivated by their fleſhly appetites: they were
nſible that the ſoul ſuffered by the diſorders of the body, and,
ough in its own nature ſpiritual, was ſo nearly united to it,
at it felt its pains, and was wounded with its ſtrokes. They
ſcovered in the ſoul a power of ſequeſtring itſelf from worldly
ings, had experienced the pleaſures of abſtract thinking, and
d thence inferred a poſſibility to exiſt, and exiſt happily, in a
te of diſunion. [n] Their poets too had prettily deviſed an
yſium, and the belief of it, being a pleaſant amuſement, had
tered into their ſobereſt contemplations; and hereupon they
ncluded that a ſeparation from the body would be the ſoul's
eateſt happineſs, as being an enlargement from its priſon, and
emption from its ſufferings: but that the body ſhould return
om the corruption of the grave, and be united to the ſoul
ain, this they never could imagine, and would have dreaded
as much as a ſlave would his return to a dungeon, had ever
ch a thought taken poſſeſſion of their minds.

We meet indeed in heathen writers with frequent mention
the ghoſts of departed men, appearing, as it were, in a viſible
rm, retaining in the ſhades below their former ſhape, and
mployed in ſuch actions as they were accuſtomed to in their
e-time; but theſe notions are rather conſidered as poetical
uſements, than having any foundation in reaſon; and all that
can collect from them is,—That the heathens did believe
at the ſoul, after this life, did immediately paſs into another
te, and there inveſt itſelf with a body, made up of light aerial
rticles, quite different from what it had before; but that the
oſs matter which they ſaw laid in the grave, and turned to
rruption, or burnt to aſhes, and blown away in the air,
ould ever be raiſed, or collected again, and revivified; of this
ey either had no conception at all, or [p] reckoned it among
e things which God himſelf was not able to perform. Athens,
St Paul's time, was one of the greateſt ſeats of learning,
d its philoſophers accounted men of as fine ſpeculations as any
the world; and yet when he came to preach there, and to
clare to them the reſurrection of Chriſt, they were amazed
this new doctrine, not knowing what he meant by it, and
ok him for a ſetter-up of ſtrange gods, [q] becauſe he preached
ſus, and the reſurrection. [r] This buſineſs of the reſurrection
s a thing ſo remote to their apprehenſions, that they under-

n Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. I.

o ---------- Quæ gratia currum
Amorumque fuit vivis, quæ cura nitentis
Paſcere equos, eadem ſequitur tellure repoſtos.
Virg. Æn. Lib. VI. ver. 53.

p Thus Pliny, reckoning up thoſe things which he thought not to be in the power
God, mentions theſe two, mortales æternitate donare, aut revocare defunc-
Lib. II. c. vii. q Acts xvii. 3. r Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. I.

ſtood the apoſtle in a quite different ſenſe, as if he had declared to them two new deities, Jeſus and Anaſtaſis; as if he had brought a new god, and a new goddeſs among them, Jeſus and the Reſurrection: and therefore, at another time, when he was diſcourſing more fully of this matter, upon barely naming the reſurrection of the dead, [s] they mocked him, and made a jeſt of what he ſaid. Feſtus was certainly a man of good ſenſe: [t] the oration which he made upon opening the aſſembly beſpeaks his addreſs and eloquence both; and we may ſuppoſe that he liſtened to St Paul's defence, with ſome patience and attention, until he came to ſpeak of the reſurrection; but that was a wild notion, in his opinion, befitting none but crazy brains: Paul, thou art beſides thyſelf, much learning does make thee mad. And in this the governor was more excuſeable, who, being a great man, and employed in public affairs, might not have leiſure to attend to ſuch abſtruſe queſtions, when [u] philoſophers themſelves, in all ages, looked upon the reſurrection as impoſſible, and thoſe who in the primitive times lived among chriſtians, called this article of our faith an abſurd and ridiculous aſſertion, and made it, on all occaſions, the ſtanding ſubject of their banter.

[x] CHRISTIANS indeed endeavoured to explain this article to them by fit alluſions and compariſons. They told them that ſleep was an oppoſite image of death, and our waking, of riſing from the dead; that the ſetting of the ſun anſwers our burial, and its riſing again, has a juſt correſpondence to our reſurrection; but all this would not do. Though they perceived the likeneſs between death and ſleep; though they obſerved the viciſſitudes of day and night, and were aware of the analogy theſe had to life and death; yet they were ſo far from making this inference, that, on the contrary, we find them complaining that

s Acts xvii. 32. t Ibid. xxvi. 24. u Pythagoras (one of the earlieſt whom hiſtory reports to have been dignified with the name of a Philoſopher) aſſerted a tranſmigration of the ſame ſoul into ſeveral bodies, at leaſt he was thought to do ſo, which is utterly inconſiſtent with a reſurrection; the number of bodies, upon theſe terms, in ſo great a proportion exceeding the number of ſouls. Plato indeed ſpeaks much of the immortality of the ſoul, but by his not ſo much as mentioning the riſing of his body again, after its diſſolution, when he treated of ſo cognate a ſubject, we may rationally preſume that he knew nothing of it. Ariſtotle held an eternity of the world, viz. as to the heavens, and the earth, and the principal parts of it: but as to things mutable, he placed that eternity in the endleſs ſucceſſion of individuals, which the immortality of particulars would have deſtroyed; and therefore, from his principles, he could never find out the reſurrection of the body, to return no more to corruption: and as for the Stoics and Epicureans, though accounted the ſubtleſt of all the ſects of philoſophers, we find them (Acts xvii. 32.) ſcoffing at the very mention of riſing from the dead; and thinking it a ridiculous notion for animated duſt once dead, to revive. South's Sermons, Vol. IV. Upon this account we find Minutius Fælix, bringing in one perſonating a Pagan, and laughing at the chriſtians, becauſe, Aniles fabulos aſtruunt & annectunt, renaſci ſe ferunt post mortem & cineres: et neſcio qua fiducia mendaciis ſuis invicem credunt.

Thus Celſus tells the chriſtians in his time, that the hope of the reſurrection of the fleſh is *ſkolekoon he elpis*, the hope of worms, a filthy and abominable thing, which God neither will, nor can do. Apud. Orig. Lib. V.

x Smalridge's Sermons.

hat, though the ſun ſet and roſe again, though themſelves ſlept nd awoke out of ſleep; yet when the day of life was once ent, they were thenceforth to ſleep for one, long, perpetual, ternal night. So little light was there in the heathen world o diſpel this gloominеſs and deſpair!

What the Jews.

WE cannot but allow indeed that the Jews had a competent nowledge given them of this article; and the deference we we to our bleſſed Saviour's authority, who, againſt the Sadducees, has eſtabliſhed the reſurrection from the very books of Moſes, muſt carry it againſt all inſinuations to the contrary: ut ſtill it muſt be owned, that though this truth was revealed o the Jews, it was wrapped up in ſuch dark terms, that the ery revelation itſelf wanted the vail to be removed that was aſt over it. [y] Intimations of a future ſtate, and of a reſurrecon from the dead, are ſcattered up and down in ſeveral parts f the Old Teſtament; but then there are ſome other paſſages f a ſuſpicious nature, which ſeem to deſtroy what theſe texts ſtabliſh, and require more penetration to reconcile than uſually lls to a common reader's ſhare. Thus, when we find Job ith great ſolemnity aſſerting, that [z] he knows that his Reeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the laſt day upon the arth; that he ſhall ſee God in his fleſh, though it be deſtroyed ith worms; and that his eyes ſhall behold him, and not anoher, though his reins be conſumed within him; we cannot eaſonably doubt of his firm and ſtedfaſt faith in a reſurrection: ut, when the ſame Job declares that [a] his life is ſpent without ope; that his eye (that very eye, wherewith he ſaid, he ſhould e the Lord) ſhall no more ſee good; and that, as a cloud is onſumed and vaniſhed away; ſo he, that goeth down to the rave ſhall come up no more; theſe ſeemingly deſperate expreſons might ſtagger a Jew's belief, ſo far as it was built upon ob's teſtimony concerning the certainty of a reſurrection.

IN like manner, when holy David declares his hope, and ſtinguiſhes himſelf from ſenſual men that live without the oughts of another world, by ſaying, [b] As for me, I ſhall beold thy face in righteouſneſs, and when I awake, ſhall be ſatiſed with thy likeneſs; we cannot well doubt but that he looked pon death as a ſhort ſleep, and that he was aſſured of awaking the reſurrection: but, when the ſame David puts theſe ueſtions to his Maker, [c] What profit is there in my blood, when go down into the pit? [d] Shall the dead ariſe, and praiſe thee? hall thy loving kindneſs be known in the grave, thy wonders the dark, and thy righteouſneſs in the land of forgetfulneſs? Vhen the ſame David ſeems to reſolve theſe queſtions in the egative by ſaying, [e] That the dead praiſe not the Lord, nor any at go down into ſilence; for man is as [f] wind, which paſſeth away,

[y] Smalridge's Sermons. [z] Job xix. 25. &c. [a] Ibid. vii. 6, 7, 9. [b] Pſal. ii. 15. [c] Ibid. xxx. 9. [d] Ibid. lxxxviii. 10, &c. [e] Ibid. cxv. 17. [f] Ibid. xviii. 39.

away, and cometh not again; a carnal and inconsiderate Jew might think him as much an unbeliever of this great article as the very Sadducees themselves, and pervert his words to a state of annihilation. We might instance in several other passages of the Old Testament, which, to a superficial reader, might seem rather to weaken than strengthen the credibility of a future resurrection: and though we have no reason to think that they any way disprove the revelation of this doctrine to the Jews, yet they certainly shew us that it was not so plainly discovered to them as it is to us; that life and immortality are brought, at least, to a greater light, through the gospel, than they ever were through the law; and what a learned Pharisee could attain to by the utmost stretch of thought, from his revelation, that each vulgar christian may read, as he runs, in almost every page of ours, without any danger of misunderstanding its sense, or any intermixture of ambiguous passages, to give a counterpoise to its attestation.

The clearness of the christian revelation, as to this particular.

THE declaration which holy Job makes, I know that my Redeemer liveth, &c. and that which we meet with in the prophet Isaiah, [g] thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise; awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew shall be as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead; these, and some other passages of the like nature, are sufficient authorities, we think, from whence we may infer a revelation of a future resurrection in the Old Testament: but then it must be owned, that several interpreters have taken them in a lower sense, and applied them to a temporal restoration only; to [h] Job's recovery of an happy condition after all his afflictions; and to the Jews getting free from the captivity, and sundry persecutions of their enemies; whereas, when we find it expressly recorded in the new revelation of the gospel, that [i] there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust, and [k] that the hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation: when we are not only assured of the thing, but have the very manner of it, as far as allusions and comparisons will reach, explained and illustrated to us; that [l] what is sown in corruption, shall be raised in incorruption, what is sown in dishonour, shall be raised in glory, &c. Nay, when we have a greater argument still, and by the instance of our Lord's resurrection, have this doctrine proved and exemplified to us; [m] for now that Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept, *i. e.* the beginning and pledge of the resurrection of all believers; [n] if we believe that

g Isa. xxvi. 19. h St Jerom, Calvin, Bishop Patrick, &c. i Acts xxiv. 15.
k John v. 28, 29. l 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43. m Ibid. ver. 20. n 1 Thess. iv. 14.

hat Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also, who sleep in esus, will God bring with him: when this doctrine, I say, in ll its parts is so fully, so clearly delivered to us in the gospel, here is no possibility of misunderstanding its meaning, or misterpreting its sense. And therefore every christian, that beeves the gospel of divine revelation, must, in consequence, elieve the resurrection, whatever difficulty, or seeming repugancy to the principles of natural philosophy, he may conceive the execution of it.

An objection against the resurrection.

" But how clearly soever the doctrine of the resurrection be revealed in scripture, yet, if it implies a plain contradiction, if it crosses our conceptions, and opposes the first principles of our reasoning, it is impossible we should bring our minds to believe it. [o] Now, what can we conceive more strange and unaccountable than when a body, by continual fraction and dissipation, is crumbled into millions of little atoms, some portions of it rarified into air, others sublimated into fire, and the rest changed into earth and water, that the elements should, after all this, surrender back their spoils, and the several parts, after such a dispersion, travel from all the quarters of the world, to meet together in the same individual body again? That God should summon a part out of this fish, that fowl, that beast, that tree, to unite into a new combination for the rebuilding of a fallen edifice, for restoring an old broken demolished carcase to itself again? That the jaws of death should relent, or the grave, of all things, make restitution; that filth and rottenness should be preparatives to to glory, and dust and ashes the seed-plots of immortality; that the sepulchre should be a place to dress ourselves in for heaven, the attiring-room, for corruption to put on incorruption, and to fit us for the beatific vision; is all a paradox to our reason, and therefore incompatible with our faith." Now, Answered.

ere we disposed to give a short answer to this objection, we might ledge, what we hinted before, that this whole controversy deends upon, and ought to be determined by, the scriptures, as rning upon these two points, viz. 1. Whether a future resurection be revealed in the scriptures? And, 2. Whether the id scriptures be the word of God? And if the matter stands hus, no man, we are sure, can pretend to the name of a chrian, who, in the least, doubts of the affirmative in either of ese two points; and, consequently, all arguments from reason philosophy, formed against an article thus proved, come too te to shake its credibility. We cannot however but observe hat, [p] least of all, should the men we have now to deal with nd fault with our asserting the possibility of a resurrection: r why the same particles of matter, in a long tract of time, ay not meet together again, and make up the same body, as well

o South's Sermons, Vol. IV. p Stillingfleet's Sermons.

well as they did, once upon a time, to compose it at first; and why should it be more incredible, that a dead body should be raised out of the grave, than that a living body should originally spring out of the earth, by the mere fermentation of matter, we cannot possibly conceive.

1. The certainty of the resurrection proved from the power of God.

THE christian doctrine however does not ascribe the resurrection to nature, or any created agent of a limited knowledge, or finite power. It tells us indeed, that angels are employed in this transaction, that, [q] with a great sound of a trumpet, they are sent out to gather together the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other; but he tells us at the same time, that they only act ministerially, and are under the guidance and direction of God. [r] Now, no man can have a true notion of God, unless he acknowledges him a Being of infinite power and wisdom; that he made the world, and all things therein; that he preserves and sustains all creatures; that they are all at his disposal, to do with them what he pleases; and that nothing can resist his will, or give the least hindrance to any thing he undertakes: and, under this conception, how can the resurrection of the dead be an impossibility to God? To collect the dispersed parts of man's body, to dispose them into their proper order, to reduce them into a temper fit to serve vital functions, and to rejoin the soul unto the body thus restored; why should it be thought an impossible, why should it be thought a difficult matter to him, who first formed and tempered man's body out of the dust, and inspired the soul into it? Yea, to him, who, out of mere confusion, digested the whole world into such wonderful order and harmony? Be the constituent parts of never so many bodies, either inclosed in the deep, or fled into the air, or changed into earth, or any other creature, yet what trouble can this give him, [s] who measures the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meteth out the heaven with a span, and comprehendeth the dust of the earth in a measure; before whom the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance? Nay, of the two, [t] it seems a matter of more easy contemplation for God to collect the scattered parts of our bodies, and remand them to their proper places, than to form them originally, out of the dust, into the regular system and proportion wherein we see them; as an artist can more readily set together any curious machine, when taken to pieces, especially, if it be of his own constructure, and the pieces under his cognizance, and within his reach, than he could compose it at first. The only difference in the comparison is, that God, who needs no instruments or deliberation, does all by the act of his will; whereas much contrivance, and many means are requisite

q Matth. xxiv. 31. r Lucas's Sermons, Vol I. s Isa. xl. 12, 15. t Fidder's Body of Divinity, Vol. I.

quiſite to men, both towards their forming, and repairing any curious piece of workmanſhip.

THE grateful Pſalmiſt, magnifying the great goodneſs of God, and his watchful providence over all his creatures, gives us this ſignal inſtance of it, [u] "I will praiſe thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; my ſubſtance was not hid from thee, when I was made in ſecret, and curiouſly faſhioned in the loweſt parts of the earth. Thine eyes did ſee my ſubſtance, yet being imperfect, and in thy book were all my members written: and if, in condeſcenſion to our capacity, God is ſaid to keep a book, to note down the gradual increaſe of the embryo in the womb; there is at leaſt equal reaſon to believe that he keeps one for recording the places where the diſſipated parts of our deceaſed bodies lie: but this book indeed is nothing elſe but his all-comprehending mind, whereby every minute atom that belongs to us is under the care and cognizance of him who made us. * The generation of our fleſh is clearly ſeen by the Father of ſpirits; the augmentation of it is known to him, in whom we live, and move, and have our beings; and the diſſolution of it is perceived by him [x] who numbers the hairs of our heads, and lets not a ſparrow fall to the ground without his remembrance and obſervation. [y] He that counteth the ſands of the ſea, knoweth all the ſcattered bodies, ſeeth all the graves and tombs, ſearcheth all the repoſitories and dormitories in the earth, knoweth what duſt belongs to each body, and what body to each ſoul. And as he knoweth all this, ſo, by his infinite power, he can recal every part to its proper place; can rally and recollect every little atom, if need be, and in the twinkling of an eye, preſent the whole race of mankind, vivid and intire, by the ſame Almighty fiat he employed in the creation of the world, when he ſpake, and it was done, he commanded, and it ſtood faſt.

And other arguments taken from familiar things.

THUS the conſideration of God's omnipotence ſolves all the difficulties in this great article of our faith, the reſurrection of our bodies, after they are diſſolved into the common maſs of matter. But to make this notion more eaſy and familiar, [z] look a little into the ſtate of the world, and you will ſoon ſee ſuch an inequality of diſtributions in it, as will neceſſitate a reſurrection, for the vindication of God's juſtice, and [a] that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether they be good or bad. Turn your eyes upon your own compoſition, and you cannot but perceive that a body, which periſhes ſo ſoon, ſooner than many fowls of the air, or beaſts of the field, or plants of the earth, can never be a proper companion for an immortal ſoul, if it makes no other appearance than in this ſhort ſcene of life, and finally periſhes when

u Pſal. xxxix. 14, 15, &c. * Pearſon on the Creed. x Matth. x. 29, 30.
y Pearſon, ibid. z Ibid. a 2 Cor. v. 10.

when it dies. [b] Obſerve with what unwillingneſs, with what reluctancy, the ſoul parts with its companion, and is forced to be torn away, as it were, by the violent hands of death, and you can hardly ſuppoſe that they were primarily intended for no longer continuance together, without queſtioning the Creator for making all men in vain. Take but a walk in your gardens (in the ſeaſon of the ſpring more eſpecially) and you will meet with many emblems of your own reſurrection, the plants and flowers peeping out of their graves, and every thing reviving, growing, and flouriſhing, at the nearer approach of the ſun. Aſk the huſbandman, and he will tell you that the corn which he ſows is not quickened, except it die, and that it muſt be buried in the ground, and there putrify, before it comes forth in all its glory, [c] the blade, and the ſtalk, and the full corn in the ear. Aſk the botaniſt, and he will inform you [d] that the aſhes in a plant, ſown in a garden, have ſometimes produced a fairer plant in its kind than ever was raiſed in a natural way; and aſk the chemiſt, and he will teach you [e] the reduction of things (though never ſo mixed and confounded with the parts of other bodies) to their prime ſtate and qualities; and, to your great amazement, will ſhew you plants, by little and little, riſing out of their ſalts, in their ſeveral proper forms, all freſh and gay, as they appear in the fields and gardens: and ſurely the chemiſtry of heaven is much more efficacious, to turn our dead aſhes into living bodies. "Till natural philoſophy therefore be better "improved (as a [f] great and pious improver of it expreſſes "himſelf) we can ſcarce imagine what methods a farther diſco- "very of the myſteries of art and nature may lead us to in re- "producing bodies; much leſs can our weak knowledge deter- "mine what phyſical means the wiſe author of the univerſe "may make uſe of to bring the reſurrection to paſs; ſince we "have but imperfect apprehenſions of the powers of one whoſe "nature is ſo incomparably ſuperior to ours.

An objection, from the tranſmutation of matter, againſt the propriety of a reſurrection.

"But how diſtant ſoever God's nature is to ours, and how "inconceivably great his power may be; yet this we lay down "for an infallible truth, that he cannot do any thing that im- "plies a contradiction: and therefore though we allow that he "may

b Newcome's Sermons. c Mark iv. 28. d Boyle, of the poſſibility of the reſurrection, in his Theological Works, Vol. III. e Thus gold, when diſſolved in Aq. Regis, appears to be a liquor, and when precipitated, looks like a ſalt, or vitriol, and, by a certain operation, may be made part of the fuel of a flame; being joined with another body, it may be reduced to glaſs, and when precipitated with mercury, it makes a glorious tranſparent powder: when precipitated with ſpirit of urine, or oil of tartar per deliquium, it forms a fulminating calx, which goes off eaſily, yet is ſtronger than gunpowder; and yet, notwithſtanding all theſe tranſmutations, it ſtill retains its nature, ſince, by chemical operations, it may be reduced to its metalline form. In like manner, mercury may be put into different ſhapes; ſometimes it is like a vapour, ſometimes like ſimple water, ſometimes like a red, or white, or yellow powder, and ſometimes like a cryſtalline ſalt, or malleable metal; yet the artiſt will ſoon reduce it to its native form again. Boyle, ubi ſupra. f Boyle, ubi ſupra.

may recover all the particles of mens bodies, wherever diſperſed, ſo long as they continue diſtinct and ſeparate; yet, when once they come to be transformed into the ſubſtance of other mens bodies, they ſeem then not to fall within the compaſs of his acting. [g] Now the parts of a body, we know, are in a continual flux; the decays of nature are repaired by the daily ſubſtitution of new matter, derived from our nutriment; and when at length, this body comes to be diſſolved by death, it ſoon after returns to earth. This earth we know farther, is animated into graſs: this graſs turns into the ſubſtance of the beaſt which eats it; this beaſt becomes food for man, and ſo by a long percolation, is converted into his fleſh and ſubſtance: ſo that ſuch matter, or ſubſtance, which was once an integral part of this man's body, perhaps, twenty years after his death, by this round of perpetual tranſmutation, comes to be an integral part of another man's. Now, if there be a reſurrection, and every man ſhall be reſtored with his own numerical body, the art will be to tell us, how the matter muſt be adjuſted, and to which body this controverted part ſhall be reſtored at the reſurrection? This is a difficulty in the common buſineſs of nutrition; but it ſeems to be much greater, in the caſe of thoſe canibals who devour one another, if ſo be the bodies of the devourers and the devoured are to riſe whole and complete at the laſt day. The only way therefore to ſupply this defect, is to ſuppoſe an acceſſion of new matter, ſince [h] we are able, without any difficulty, to conceive the ſame perſon at the reſurrection, though in a body not exactly in make and parts the ſame which he had here, the ſame conſciouſneſs being along with the ſoul that inhabits it." This is the great objection which thoſe who ny the identity of the reſurrection-body have to offer, and there-re to give a proper ſolution, we ſhall, 1. Conſider what the ipture teaches us concerning this matter; and then, 2. In at manner we are to ſolve theſe difficulties.

2. The propriety of a reſurrection proved from ſcripture.

1. ALLOWING then that the declaration of holy Job relates the reſurrection of the dead, his words ſeem to be very ematical: [i] Though after my ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, t in my fleſh (in fleſh, which ſhews the reality, and in my ſh, which ſhews the propriety and identity of his reſurrection) hall ſee God; whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and mine eyes ll behold, and not another. The change and alteration, ich our glorified bodies ſhall receive, will be inconceivably at indeed, but St Paul has aſſured us that their matter and ſtance will be the ſame: for though [k] Chriſt ſhall change r vile bodies, that they may be faſhioned like unto his glorious

g South's Sermons, Vol. IV. h Locke's Eſſay, Vol. I. c. xxvii. i Job . 26, 27. Quid hac prophetia manifeſtius? Nullus tam aperte, poſt Chriſt-, quam iſte ante Chriſtum, de reſurrectione loquitur. S. Hierom. Epiſt. lxi. hil. iii. 21.

body; yet [l] THIS corruption (says he, [m] pointing at, or taking hold of, his own flesh) must put on incorruption, and THIS mortal must put on immortality; and therefore he assures us in another place, that [n] he, who raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken our mortal bodies. When therefore the apostle, in answer to the common cavil of infidels, How are the dead raised up, and with what body (or more properly, with what sort of body) do they come? endeavours to illustrate the thing by a comparison taken from seed sown in the ground, which, as he tells us, [o] is not that body which shall be, he is certainly speaking, not of the substance, but of the qualities of the resurrection-body, as is manifest from his application of the simile (wherein the force of all such-like reasoning lies) [p] so also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body: for these are the properties, and not the matter, or substance of a body.

SUPPOSING, however, that the apostle's meaning had not been so clear in this passage, yet when we are told, in relation to the place, whence the resurrection shall begin, that [q] they who sleep in the dust of the earth, they [r] who are in the grave, shall hear the voice, and rise; that [s] the sea shall give up the dead which are in it, and death and the grave shall deliver up the dead which are in them; whereas, [t] if the same bodies did not rise, they, which are in the dust, should not revive; if God should give us any other bodies than our own, neither the sea nor the grave would give up their dead: when we are told, in relation to the consequence of the resurrection, that [u] we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad; whereas it suits not with the nature of a just retribution, that he who sinned, or served God in one body, should be punished or rewarded in another: when we are told, in relation to those that shall never rise, because they shall never die, that * they shall be caught up together with those that are dead, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall ever be with the Lord; whereas, if those who are alive shall be caught up in the same bodies, only spiritualized and glorified, we cannot but imagine (without supposing a strange disparity among the saints) that those who are dead will appear in theirs likewise: and lastly, when we are told, in relation to those examples which God was pleased to give us, in order

l 1 Cor. xv. 53. m Sed & apostolus cum dicit, oportet enim corruptibile hoc induere incorruptionem, & mortale hoc induere immortalitatem, numquid non corpus suum, quodammodo contingentis, & digito palpantis est vox? *Touto pharton touto, kai to thneton touto.* Ruff. in Smb. n Rom. viii. 11. o 1 Cor. xv. 37. p Ibid. ver. 42. q Dan. xii. 2. r John v. 28. s Rev. xx. 13. t Pearson on the Creed. u 2 Cor. v. 10. * 1 Thess. iv. 17.

der to confirm our faith in the reſurrection, that [x] the graves re opened, and many bodies of ſaints, which ſlept, aroſe, and me out of their graves, and appeared unto many; whereas, d they not aroſe in the ſame bodies which were laid in the ave, their appearance would have been of no avail; their quaintance could not have known them; and therefore, when e are told all this, I ſay, and the reſurrection of the ſame body ſet before us in ſo many different views and proſpects; it ſeems if the aim and deſign of the goſpel was to eſtabliſh us in this eat article.

From antiquity.

NAY, if we purſue our inquiry, we ſhall find that this was the eclared doctrine of the chriſtian church, in the books next ſucceeding the canonical ſcriptures; that Clemens Romanus, owned St Paul as his fellow-labourer, admoniſheth the Corinthians [y], at none of them ſhould preſume to ſay, THIS fleſh is not to be iſed up, nor come to judgment; that Polycarp, a diſciple of e apoſtles, [z] when bound to the ſtake, bleſſed God that he was nong the number of martyrs, in order to the reſurrection of s ſoul and body to eternal life; that Irenæus born about ſeven ars before St John's death, rehearſing the articles of faith, ds, [a] the coming of Chriſt, to bring all things paſt to account, d to raiſe up all fleſh of mankind; that Juſtin Martyr, conrted about the year 130, tells Trypho, [b] I, and all chriſtians, ho are intirely orthodox, do believe that there will be a reſurction of the fleſh; and to name no more, that Tertullian, towards the end of the ſecond century, wrote a [c] book, *ex Profeſſo*, upon this ſubject, wherein he endeavours to ſatisfy the popur objection above-mentioned. Nor can we conceive, why the ſtly ſpices of the Sabeans and Arabians, as Tertullian [d] notes, ere ſpent with greater prodigality on the burials of chriſtians, an the heathens uſed in the incenſe they burned to their gods; why the heathens, in the perſecution under Antonius Verus, ere wont to ſcatter the aſhes of martyred ſaints in rivers to revent (as they thought) the reſurrection, wherewith the riſtians ſupported themſelves in their ſufferings, unleſs, not nly a reſurrection in general, but a reſuſcitation of the very me bodies, which were thus embalmed, or diſperſed, was the rrent belief of thoſe ages.

From reaſon.

SINCE this then is the doctrine of Chriſt, taught by his poſtles, and confirmed by their ſucceſſors, whatever difficulties ay ariſe from the ordinary courſe of nature in nutrition, or om the barbarity of ſome, who are ſaid to feed on human fleſh, ey ſhould not impair our belief of it; becauſe, in this caſe, here the divine veracity is engaged, a ſerious and impartial an will be apt to ſuppoſe, that, in the courſe of nature, Omnipotence may ſeveral ways interpoſe, in order to hinder a man's being

[x] Matth. xxvii. 53. [y] Epiſt. ii. [z] Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. Lib. IV. c. xv. [a] Lib. I. [b] Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. IV. c. xi. [c] De Reſurrectione Carnis. [d] Apol. c. xlii.

being nouriſhed by the body of another, and ſo prevent the confuſion here preſumed; and that this may be done more eaſily, conſidering how ſmall a quantity of what is eaten ordinarily enters into concretion. For whatever paſſes into the ſtomach is, in ſo great a meaſure, thrown off again by the natural methods of ſecretion, that the moſt accurate conjectures of the learned from ſtatic experiments * do not allow the twentieth part to be detained as incorporated nouriſhment, and in human fleſh, which is ſo very unfit for nouriſhment, perhaps the proportion may be leſs.

BUT allowing the utmoſt, yet ſtill it may be ſuppoſed, that though the outward make and proportion of this natural body ſhall be preſerved, yet its intire ſubſtance will not be employed in the formation of our ſpiritual one: for ſince, as [e] the apoſtle intimates, it is to be raiſed in ſurpriſing glory, for an immenſe duration, and for the enjoyment of a ſpiritual life, ſo widely different from this; it were abſurd to imagine, that our preſent natural building ſhould ſo far preſcribe a model to it, as to have it incumbered with any parts, that ſhall be then ſuperfluous, though at preſent the neceſſary inſtruments of our animal life. When therefore our body ſhall be reſcued from the bondage of corruption, and, in conſequence, from all neceſſity of repairs, neither hungring nor thirſting any more for ever; it is reaſonable to think that it will not be loaded with that bulk of matter (in proportion near a ſeventh to the whole ſubſtance of the fleſh) which, in this fleeting body, compoſes the parts that are neceſſary to concoct and diſtribute the nutriment which ſuſtains its fabric, and ſupplies its decays, and [f] whereas, in this natural body, there is a maſſive ſtrength of bones and muſcles requiſite to anſwer the fatigues of labour, and all the neceſſities of life; when theſe occaſions ſhall be removed, and the body framed for the ſervice of the ſoul, and the exerciſe of ſpiritual faculties only, it is reaſonable again to imagine, that a much leſs quantity of matter than what goes to make up our preſent bulk will ſuffice.

SINCE nature therefore has been ſo elegantly frugal in the frame of the preſent body, as to project ſo many uſeful deſigns, ſuch ſurpriſing variety, and force of motion, together with a graceful outward figure, all within the compaſs of ſo ſmall a bulk of matter, and yet every way accommodated to this groſs world, and the exigencies of an animal life; [g] ſince, I ſay, this tenement of clay, which is but of a very ſhort continuance, is ſo curiouſly built; how can we imagine, but that the reſurrection-body, which is to laſt for ever, muſt be modelled, at leaſt with equal art, to anſwer the powers of that exalted ſpirit, the ſoul, and to taſte the new enjoyments of an angelic life? Though therefore the ſcriptures, as we have ſhewed before, do plainly teſtify

* D'Olyly's Diſſertations. e 1 Cor. xv. 43. f D'Olyly, ibid. g Ibid.

testify that our spiritual body shall be made out of the materials of this natural one; yet, since they no where affirm that all these materials shall be used in its composition, unless we can suppose this spiritual body loaded with parts that are superfluous, our first position will stand firm, viz. that the substance of the natural body will be considerably more than sufficient for composing the spiritual one; and, consequently, all the difficulties alledged from the presumed deficiency of bodies, emaciated by lingering sickness, from the redundancies of the corpulent, and whatever may be objected of the like nature, will, all at once, sink, and vanish into nothing. In short, [h] to denominate the same body, it is not necessary that it should consist of every individual part, which has at any time composed it, or, immediately before the change, was incident to it; for considering the perpetual transmutation of matter, no man could then have the same numerical body one moment, It is sufficient to our purpose, in asserting the identity of the rising body, that it should consist of some considerable parts, at least, of the body which died. The scriptures, as we said, do no where demand any more: and therefore, it being left to our liberty, so to conjecture and argue upon this article, as to recommend, if possible, the

What makes the identity of a body.

h Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. This author has another method of solving the difficulty, which seems to savour a little of the notion of some Jews, who pretend that there is a certain incorruptible part in man's body, from whence the whole, at the resurrection, is to be produced; for he supposes that there are, in all animals, certain constituent insensible particles, which contain, in miniature, the several parts of the whole body, and that the foreign matter, taken in by way of nutriment, which fills and distends the bodies of men, and augments their members, is not strictly essential to it, but only convenient for the man in his present state: so that, while these particles of foreign matter are in a continual flux, the original, and fundamental principle, which properly constitutes the body, and from which it ought to be denominated, through all the changes of life and death, remains itself fixed, and unchangeable, without confusion of parts, or the least danger of incorporating with other bodies. Hence he supposes, that, besides the parts which are corrupted, there is this seminal principle abiding in mens bodies, which, by just degrees, is dilated, after a curious and surprising manner, at the resurrection, and so constitutes the complete body. But this conjecture, we conceive, is a little too fine spun, and perhaps destitute of any real foundation. Another author has taken a different method in this question. He supposes, that whatever deficiencies there shall be, as to any particular bodies, they shall be supplied by additions out of the common mass of matter. "The resurrection of the same body, says he, does not necessarily imply that all the same matter shall be raised, and no other, and no more. For if all shall be raised in the most perfect stature and proportion of human bodies, as there is no doubt but they shall, then infants and dwarfs, and such as die of consumptions, must have new matter added to that which they died withal; and therefore the resurrection of the same body can imply no more than this,—That every body shall be raised out of the same matter, so far as it will go; and therefore, wherever there is a defect in any particular body, God, no doubt, will add new substance to it; and yet this will no more hinder it from being the same numerical body than the reparation of an house, with new stones and timber, hinders it from being the same numerical house." Scott's Mediator. But this solution seems liable to some objections, which the supposition of a less quantity of matter, requisite in our glorified, than in our natural bodies, certainly stands clear of, and therefore we have given the preference to it.

the credibility of it to common ſenſe; we cannot think that thoſe perſons have done any great ſervice to religion, who, by clogging it with groſs and heavy expoſitions, have betrayed it to the contempt and inſults of the wicked and profane. And ſo we proceed to conſider, in the laſt place, the manner in which this reſurrection is to be effected.

3. The manner of the reſurrection.

OUR bleſſed Saviour, foretelling his diſciples the deſtruction which would ſhortly come upon Jeruſalem, takes occaſion, by an eaſy tranſition, to fall into an account of the day of judgment, and to acquaint them with ſome circumſtances that would be preliminary to it. [i] Then ſhall the Son of man, as he comes in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, ſend his angels with a great ſound of a trumpet, and they ſhall gather together his elect, from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other: and St Paul, to comfort the Theſſalonians for the loſs of ſuch friends as had probably ſuffered for the chriſtian profeſſion, gives them this deſcription of the reſurrection, [k] the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven, with a ſhout, with the voice of an arch-angel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Chriſt ſhall he raiſe firſt; then we, which are alive, ſhall be caught up together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. [l] It was an antient cuſtom among moſt nations, to gather their aſſemblies together by the ſound of a trumpet; and, in alluſion to this cuſtom, both our Saviour, and his apoſtle here tells us that God, by the ſame ſound, will aſſemble the world of men to judgment, *i. e.* by a real audible ſound, like that of a trumpet, though proceeding from no other inſtrument than that of the arch-angel's mouth. For if God, when he deſcended on Mount Sinai, to pronounce the law, was attended with [m] the voice of a trumpet, exceeding loud, ſo that all the people, which were in the camp, trembled; there can be no reaſon aſſigned, from the nature of the thing, why he ſhould not, by ſuch a ſound, proclaim his coming to judge the world. But then, together with this mighty voice or trump of the arch-angel, there ſhall proceed from Chriſt a divine power, even [n] his holy Spirit, by which he raiſed himſelf from the dead, by whoſe omnipotent agency all the ſcattered parts of the bodies of his ſaints ſhall be gathered up, re-united, and re-organized into glorious bodies; and thoſe happy ſouls which formerly inhabited them, and which are now come down from heaven with their Saviour, ſhall every one re-enter its own proper body, and animate it with immortal vigour and activity; while thoſe who ſhall then be alive, and never taſte of death, ſhall be † changed, transformed, and glorified, in the twinkling of an eye.

THE

i Matth. xxiv. 30, 31. k 1 Theſſ. iv. 16, 17. l Scott's Mediator.
m Exod. xix. 16. n Rom. viii. 11. † 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.

THE apoſtle, to give us a more diſtinct perception of that wonderful change which ſhall paſs upon every good chriſtian at he reſurrection, expreſſes it in the five oppoſite reſpects. [o] Our odies, ſays he, in their preſent ſtate, are [p] weak, and diſhonourble, and animal, and corruptible, and mortal; weak, by reaſon f the jarring principles of their compoſition; diſhonourable, y reaſon of the many noiſome and humbling effects which thoſe rincipals produce; animal, becauſe their life depends, as that of eaſts does upon the returns of an uncertain breath; corruptible, ecauſe every day they tend towards diſſolution, which, at laſt, finiſhed in actual death: but, on the contrary, he tells us that hoſe bodies, which our reſurrection ſhall produce, are vigorous, nd glorious, and ſpiritual, and incorruptible, and immortal; igorous, without any weakneſs or impediment; glorious, with-ut any darkneſs or deformity; ſpiritual, without any groſſneſs r incumbrance; incorruptible, without any pain or paſſibility; mmortal, without any alteration or decay; and well they may e ſo, when [q] Chriſt ſhall faſhion them like unto his glorious ody, according to the working, whereby he is able to ſubdue ll things unto himſelf. [r] Our Lord, to fortify his diſciples againſt hoſe troubles which he had told them were likely to enſue, took Peter, and James, and John, with him into the Mount, nd there gave them an ocular demonſtration of this happy hange: he transfigured himſelf before them, and aſſumed, for while, the luſtre of a glorified body; under which appearance, is ſaid that his face ſhone like the ſun, and his raiment (pierced hrough with the beams that darted from his body) became as hite as the light; inſomuch that his diſciples fell into an extaſy t the beholding of their own appearance, as being too weak at reſent to bear the very ſight of that glory and majeſty which n due time they themſelves were to put on. And, if each ſon f the reſurrection is to have a body ſublimated and refined to his degree of ſplendor and purity, it even raviſhes the heart to hink what a glorious aſſembly that of the ſaints muſt be, when very one [s] ſhall ſhine forth like ſo many ſuns in the kingdom of heir Father.

The difference between our preſent and future bodies.

WHETHER, [u] when we ariſe again, we ſhall be all of the ſame orm and ſtature, and in all the bloom, beauty, and vigour of outh; whether there will be then any difference of ſexes mong the faints, and to what ends that difference, if admitted, will ſerve; whether we ſhall retain the ſame ſenſes, and after what manner they will be affected with their reſpective objects; whether our ſouls, in their new conjunction, ſhall perceive hings by the help of fancy, and corporeal ideas, as they do ow; whether our bodies ſhall paſs from place to place in pro-greſſive motion, or bound all at once, wherever the mind direct them,

Several queſtions concerning the reſurrection.

[o] Young's Sermons, Vol. I. [p] 1 Cor. xv. [q] Phil. iii. 21. [r] Young, ibid. Matth. xvii. 1. &c. [s] Ibid. xiii. 43. [u] Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. I.

them, in a moment; whether our bodies will then occupy ſpace, as much as they do now; and whether the ſurface of the earth will be large enough to contain all mankind upon it at the day of reſurrection: theſe, and ſome more of the like nature, are queſtions of curioſity more than uſe, what the ſcriptures have no where determined, but what he, who is minded to entertain himſelf with ſuch niceties, may find plentifully diſcuſſed in the lucubrations of the ſchool-men. And therefore to proceed,

The uſes of this doctrine.

* It is very remarkable in the caſe of righteous Job, that, when he was ſtripped, and deſtitute of all that the world calls Comfort, God was pleaſed to reveal this doctrine of the reſurrection to him in ſo bright a manner, that we cannot have the article fuller expreſſed at this day. That Job had ſo full a revelation of this comfortable truth, was a particular mercy to him; but it is likewiſe an inſtruction to us, that, ſince the man of univerſal afflictions had this revelation given him, for a ſure means of conſolation, there can be no affliction, to which the ſame means may not be applied with all deſirable ſucceſs. The author to the Hebrews, ſpeaking of the † hope that is ſet before every one of us, in the proſpect of the reſurrection, calleth it a Strong Conſolation, and an Anchor of the Soul both ſure and certain: and indeed what conſolation can be ſtronger, or what ſtate of life can be ſo uncomfortable, as that this may not ſuffice to compoſe and ſweeten it? How ſtrong a conſolation is it for a man, under bodily grief and pains to contemplate a ſtate, whereunto he is paſſing, where ſhall be no more ſorrow, no more pain, and ‡ where all tears ſhall be wiped from his eyes? ‖ How ſtrong a conſolation is it for a man, under bodily blemiſhes or defects, to conſider that theſe bodies are not the qualified bodies we are to live in for ever, but that all their infirmities will be cured in the grave; whereas the corruption wherein they are ſown deſtroys all diſtinction, ſo the incorruption wherein they ſhall be raiſed will certainly make none? § How ſtrong a conſolation is it to a man, under the apprehenſion or approach of death, to be able to look upon it as an enemy, that lies diſarmed, and bleeding, and gaſping at his feet; a ſafe retreat from ſorrow, and an happy entrance into a life of joy and happineſs, and undiſturbed tranquillity for evermore? How ſtrong a conſolation is it for a man, under the circumſtances of deſtitution and neglect, to be perſuaded that there is not any perſon in the world ſo great, ſo happy, ſo honoured, ſo beloved, but that, having a little patience, he himſelf ſhall be more ſo? and laſtly, how ſtrong a conſolation is it to any of us, upon the deceaſe of our friends or relations, to remember, that though by the laws of eternal deſtiny, they are forced to leave us, yet, at the laſt day, there ſhall be a general diſcharge from death, when thoſe that are

* Young's Sermons, Vol. I. † Chap. vi. 18, 19. ‡ Rev. vii. 17. ‖ Newcome's Sermons, Vol. I. § Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I.

e ſo near and dear ſhall be reſtored to us again, and enter in- the joy of our Lord with us, never to be parted more. hus comfortable contemplations does the doctrine of our re- rrection yield, in all the calamities that can befal us; only to ake this comfort certainly our own, not only the faith, but e practice likewiſe of the great apoſtle of the Gentiles, as he clares it in his defence before Felix, ſhould be always the mat- r of our imitation: [a] I have hopes towards God, ſays he, that ere will be a reſurrection both of the juſt and unjuſt, and erefore, herein do I exerciſe myſelf, to have always a conſci- ce void of offence toward God and toward man; that ſo, when our earthly houſe of this tabernacle ſhall be diſſolved, e may have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, ernal in the heavens.

CHAP. VIII.

f a Future Judgment, and an Everlaſting State of Happineſs or Miſery.

AFTER the reſurrection of the dead, and when each parti- cular ſoul has taken poſſeſſion of its reſpective body, the ipture acquaints us that we muſt [a] all appear before the judg- nt-ſeat of Chriſt; for [b] God hath appointed a day, wherein will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man, whom hath ordained, whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, that he hath raiſed him from the dead. So that in treating this great article, our purpoſe muſt be,

I. To inquire into the certainty of a future judgment.
II. To conſider the nature and extent of it.
III. To deſcribe the ſolemnity and proceſs of it: And,
IV. To examine a little into the time and manner of its com- upon us.

I. WHAT the ſacred writings, thoſe eſpecially of the New ſtament, have diſcovered of this matter, we ſhall have occa- n hereafter to lay together in one view; and, in the mean e, may obſerve, that there is ſcarce any religious truth, ex- ting the Being of a God, in which mankind have more univer- y agreed, than concerning a future judgment. [c] If we look k into the principles of heathen theology, we may find this ſtrated, not only in the flights of their poets, in the harangues heir orators, and in the dictates of their philoſophers, which e been particularly collected by the holy fathers, [d] of the

A future judgment proved from univerſal conſent.

a Acts xxiv. 15, 16. b 2 Cor. v. 1.
2 Cor. v. 10. b Acts xvii. 31. c Archbiſhop Wake's Sermons. d This y be ſeen in the works yet extant of Juſtin Martyr, Euſebius, Theodoret, &c.

church in their writings againſt them; but, as Tertullian [e] well obſerves, even in their common converſation, and when men uſually ſpeak according to their natural impreſſions. Thus, by calling God to witneſs, and to judge of their actions and intentions, as well as by commending themſelves, and their cauſe to him, when they could find no remedy or relief from men, they plainly ſhewed it to be a principle implanted in their very nature. * "That there is a God, who ſees and obſerves what paſſes "here below, and will, one day or other, rectify all the preſent "ſeeming irregular diſpenſations of his providence, in the govern- "ment of the world." From whence the father rightly infers, "that the ſoul, though ſhe is oppreſſed with the burden of the "fleſh, diſabled by vicious habits, and debauched by a falſe re- "ligion; yet, when ſhe recollects herſelf, when ſhe ſhakes off "her lethargy, and recovers her intervals of thinking and ſo- "briety, ſhe then owns the unity of the divine nature, appeals "to God, as her judge, and declares her expectation of retri- "bution from him:" ſo that we may ſafely conclude with another father [f], that this doctrine of a final inqueſt to paſs upon all our actions, "was no politic device, contrived to keep the igno- "rant multitude in awe, no chimerical fancy, peculiar to their "poets, though they were their firſt divines; no, it was main- "tained by their moſt eminent philoſophers, by men of the "ſtricteſt and moſt inquiſitive reaſoning;" nay, we may ſay, by men of the looſeſt, and moſt licentious way of thinking too, ſince we find in Lucian, who generally paſſes for an atheiſt, theſe remarkable words: [g] God, ſays he, brought man out of nothing to ſomething, and is in heaven beholding the juſt and unjuſt and writing down in books every man's actions, in order to recompence them according to their deeds, in that day which he himſelf hath appointed.

From the power of conſcience.

AND indeed ſo clear is the evidence of this truth, that whereſoever we turn our eyes, whether into the nature and conſtitution of the little world within, or into the government and adminiſtration of the greater world without us, we cannot but acknowledge the reaſonableneſs of this belief. [h] If we conſider the nature of our own ſouls, we readily perceive that there is a certain principle implanted in every one of us, which not only directs and informs us what we ought to do, and what to avoid, but moreover checks or encourages us, according as what we have done is either good or evil. Now upon this ſentence which our conſciences here paſs upon all our actions, we find either a pleaſure and confidence, and ſatisfaction, if we have done well; or elſe fear, and terror, and diſtruſt, if we have done ill; and this, no

e Apolog. * Collier's Sermons. f Juſtin Martyr. g His words are these: *Anthroopon ek me ontoon Theos eis to einai paregage, kai eſtin en ouranoo blepoon dikaious kai adikous, kai en biblois tas praxeis apographemenos and podooſtei de paſin hen hemeran autos eneteilato.* Philopat. h Archbiſhop Wake's Sermons.

with reference to any reward we are like to receive, or any punishment we may be in danger of suffering in the present world; for be the action never so secret, yet, according as its quality is, the conscience either accuses or condems us for it, no less than if it had been done in the face of the whole world. Nay, and what is a farther confirmation of this matter, the nearer we approach to our latter end, the more powerful and vigorous are these impressions of our consciences upon our souls. For it is then chiefly the sinner begins to reflect with horror on his life past, and to hate and fear the consequences of his evil-doings, when he is just ready to die, and by consequence is passed all apprehension of any farther inquest in this life: whereas the good and virtuous man embraces death with such quiet and composure, and oftentimes with such a sensible joy and satisfaction, as if he were to receive great good by it. Now whence should these different resentments arise in mens minds? Why should the consciousness of an unreasonable or wicked action make a man uneasy, when none knows it but himself? Why the reflection upon a life spent in flagitiousness fill him with horror and amazement, when he is going out of the world? Why should this happen, I say, if his mind did not strongly suggest, that God will bring every secret thing into judgment, and reward every man according to his works?

[i] THE conscience of the greatest man, when irritated by some heinous guilt, is neither to be over-awed by power, nor charmed by pleasure, nor diverted by business: it breaks through the strongest guards; makes its way into the closest retirement; and strikes, without regard to persons, with an impartial and inexorable justice. This made Tiberius pine away with anguish in the midst of empire, and confess, that he thought himself as miserable as the gods could make him, being not able to shake off the dismal expectation of a future account, which pursues the wicked wherever they go, and fills their minds with images of horror. The conscience, on the contrary, of the meanest of men, when they can acquit themselves as to the main; when they can give a fair account, and look back with pleasure on a well-spent life, enables them to bear the harshest circumstances with singular fortitude and unconcernedness. They have a natural prescience, that providence will appear for them afterward; that folly and violence will domineer only in this life, but reason and honesty be considered in another; and this persuasion buoys up their innocence, and supports their spirits, hardens their resolutions, and makes them almost impregnable against all accidents and injuries. This made Socrates appear so great and graceful at his trial: [k] the hopes of appearing before more equal judges, after his death, where his cause should be re-heard and justified, made him despise the malice of his enemies, and drink of that mortal draught with as little concern as if he had been at an entertainment: and so

i Collier's Sermons. k Plato Apol. Socratis.

ſo may any one adventure to die, when the teſtimony of his conſcience is this, that [l] in ſimplicity, and godly ſincerity, he has had his converſation in the world.

From the adminiſtration of providence

ALL men, that admit of the being of a God, are agreed, we preſume, in this, that, as he is the author of all perfections in all other things, ſo he can have nothing defective or imperfect in himſelf; that, as the world was not at firſt made by chance, but by a moſt wiſe, and good, and powerful Being, ſo neither is it now governed by chance, but by the providence of the ſame God who firſt made it. [m] Now if God is ſo infinitely perfect in himſelf, and this world be ſubjected to the guidance of his providence, then we muſt of neceſſity acknowledge a judgment to come, becauſe it is plain, that, as human affairs are ordered in this preſent world, they ſhew no great ſign of an exact juſtice and goodneſs in the adminiſtration of them; ſince the beſt men are oftentimes the moſt unfortunate, and the moſt profligate, the moſt happy, in the enjoyment of the good things of this life. Either therefore we muſt altogether deny that there is a God, and that the world is governed by him, or we muſt ſay that he is not juſt and good, and therefore minds not what becomes of thoſe that are ſo; or that he is ignorant and impotent, either not knowing how things paſs here below, or, if he knows, not able to redreſs them; (both of which do equally deſtroy the very notion of a God, which includes an infinite perfection in juſtice and goodneſs, as well as in power and knowledge) or, laſtly, if there be a God, and that God does take care of the affairs of men, and is good and juſt, and has ſuch knowledge and power, as we aſcribe to him, then it muſt remain, that there ſhall be a future judgment, in which all theſe uncertain, irregular diſpenſations of his providence, as they appear to us, ſhall be cleared and ſet right, and the good and bad receive the juſt recompence of what their actions in this world have deſerved.

IN this world indeed (to enlarge a little upon the ſubject) there is a great deal of darkneſs ſitting upon the face of God's diſpenſations. [n] The fate of the righteous and wicked is ſhuffled in common and promiſcuous events, as if the diſtinctions of good and evil were nothing but empty names, and terms of philoſophy. Nay, ſometimes a man fares the worſe for his integrity, and thoſe who are righteous, make themſelves a prey; their virtue is diſcountenanced and oppreſſed; they are perſecuted in their fortune, and in their fame; are purſued with a ſucceſſion of croſs accidents, and oftentimes ſtruggle with all difficulties and misfortunes of life. The author to the Hebrews hath told us how roughly the moſt illuſtrious ſaints, of whom the world was not worthy, were uſed; that they were expoſed to penury and contempt, as well as the violence of cruel men; [o] that they wandered

l 2 Cor. i. 12. m Archbiſhop Wake's Sermons. n Collier's Sermons.
o Heb. xi. 37.

andered about in ſheep-ſkins, and goat-ſkins, in dens and caves f the earth; that they were deſtitute, afflicted, tormented: n the other ſide, it has been both obſerved, and not a little mented, how ſtrangely wickedneſs and injuſtice have proſpered; hat fair returns of advantage have been brought in by fraud nd circumvention; how often rapine and oppreſſion have made heir way to greatneſs and power; and (what is more ſurriſing) how they ſeem to enjoy them with as much ſerenity as hey acquired them with injuſtice. It is the obſervation of oly Job, that the [p] wicked live, and become old, and are migh- y in power; that their ſeed is eſtabliſhed in their ſight with hem, and their offspring before their eyes; that their houſes are afe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them; for they pend their days in wealth, and in a moment, without any re- narkable judgment, go down to the grave: and now, if there were no ſtate after this, the Pſalmiſt's haſty complaint were un- nſwerable, and good men, upon many occaſions, might apply o themſelves, without retracting it, [q] that they had cleanſed heir hearts in vain, and waſhed their hands in innocency. But hough providence, for very good reaſons, ſuffers virtue and vice to be unſuitably treated here; though God may connive at he wicked for a while, either for their repentance, or more ex- mplary puniſhment; though he may try the faith and con- ſtancy of his ſervants for their greater advantage; yet the marks of the divine favour or diſpleaſure will not be always thus myſtical and concealed. When [r] the book of remembrance, which the prophet mentions, is called over, then there will be a viſible and everlaſting diſtinction made, and the whole intelli- gent creation will plainly [s] diſcern between him that ſerved God, and him that ſerved him not. For can we imagine that God will for ever diſcountenance his own orders, and make his laws a grievance to ſuch as keep them? Will he take no notice of thoſe who have denied their ſtrongeſt paſſions, and renounced their faireſt intereſt in obedience to his commands? Will the name of virtue and vice be undiſtinguiſhably buried in the grave, and carried into the land where all things are forgotten? Upon this ſuppoſition it is impoſſible to account, not only for the adminiſtration of providence, but even for the inſtitution of our moſt holy religion. For when God commands us to mortify our ſenſual appetites, to crucify the fleſh, with its affections and luſts, to pluck out our right eyes, to cut off our right hands, and to live above the pleaſures of the body; when he forbids the laying up for ourſelves treaſures on earth, the indulgence of pride and ambition, the affectation of ſecular honour and power; and, on the contrary, enjoins meekneſs, and patience, and poverty of ſpirit, a converſation in heaven, and a contempt of the things of this life; of what ſervice or tendency theſe precepts

[p] Job xxi. 7, &c. [q] Pſal. lxxiii. 13. [r] Mal. iii. 16. [s] Ibid. ver. 18.

precepts and prohibitions are, we cannot ſee, unleſs to make life more miſerable than nature made it, if this is the only ſcene we are to be concerned in, and if, when we die, all our expectations of a retribution to be made us vaniſh with our breath.

WHETHER therefore we look into the world, or into ourſelves, into the adminiſtration of God's providence, or the diſpenſation of his holy word, we cannot but learn this leſſon, that as ſure as the conſent of all nations, and the forebodings of our own minds are true, as ſure as God is juſt, and his word infallible, ſo certainly there will be a future judgment. And of what nature and extent that judgment is to be, we come now in the next place to inquire.

The nature of the future judgment which is univerſal.

II. THE ſcripture has aſſured us, that we ſhall all, of what degree or denomination ſoever, appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt. And the only exception to be made to it is, [t] that mere idiots, or naturals (as we commonly call them) who have no uſe of their reaſon, or children and infants, who died before they came to the exerciſe of it, ſhall not be brought before the laſt tribunal; becauſe the reaſon which the apoſtle aſſigns for our appearing there is, that we may all receive according to what we have done, whether it be good or evil. Bating the caſe then of thoſe that are incompetent, we are given to underſtand, [u] that all the ſons and daughters of Adam will be ſummoned into this great aſſize; that none will be ſo great, as to be excuſed; none ſo mean, as to be overlooked; that no proxies or repreſentatives will be allowed; but every one muſt appear in his own perſon, high and low, rich and poor, one with another. This is a poſition ſo clear, that it needs no proof: and all we ſhall do to evince farther the univerſal extent of the laſt judgment, is only to remind ſome perſons of it, whoſe conditions in this life are very different, and upon that account, perhaps, are but too apt to make them forget it.

1. As to perſons.

The great and rich.

1. GREAT riches, and great power, we ſee, make men reverenced and adored, like ſo many deities in this world: * all men court and flatter them, and place a great diſtinction between them, and thoſe of a meaner rank and fortune, which is apt to ſwell their minds, and make them proud. They look down upon the reſt of mankind as very much below them, and think they merit not a little, whenever they look up to God: they ſee that human judicatures very often have great reſpect to mens perſons, and they hope that God will conſider their quality too, and deal with them like princes and nobles: ſo that, if they believe they ſhall be judged, yet they perſuade themſelves they ſhall not be judged like other men; that God will wink at their faults, have reſpect to their rank and quality, and excuſe them from the ſtrict obſervation of ſome laws which they fancy were

[t] Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. [u] Collier's Sermons. * Sherlock on Judgment.

ere only made for meaner perſons. But what a vain imagi-ation is this, that God will have regard to earthly greatneſs in dging the world? Great and ſmall, alas, are but comparative rms: and every rank and degree of men appears conſiderable o thoſe below them; ſo thoſe above uſe them as inferiors, and re not afraid to judge and correct them for their faults. Is here not then a much greater diſtance between God and the reateſt emperor, than between the greateſt emperor and the eaneſt ſubject? [z] If God ſpared not the angels that ſinned, but aſt them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of dark-neſs, to be reſerved unto judgment; how can any man think hat his power and greatneſs, which, be it what it will, can ever be compared with the devils, ſhould excuſe him from the udgment of God?

THE mighty men of this world, we ſee, are expoſed to all he chances and viciſſitudes of fortune, as well as others: pain nd ſickneſs ſtand in no awe of their greatneſs, and death is no more afraid of them, than of a beggar. Thoſe who are gods on earth, muſt die like men; and after a little funeral pomp is over, and they are laid in their graves with a little more cere-mony than ordinary, their guards, and retinue, and dependents forſake them, and leave them a prey to the worms. And is this the creature too great to reverence and worſhip God, or too big to be judged, whom worms ſhall feed upon, and beggars walk over his grave? this, in ſhort, is the weak and frail ſtate of the greateſt men on earth: they go naked and unarmed into another world, ſtripped of their power and fortunes, of riches and honours, which dazzled the eyes of men here; and when they are gone, all men ſpeak their minds freely of them; judge their lives and actions; arraign their memories, and revenge their injuries upon their graves. And when they are become little enough to be judged by men, ſurely they are not too great to undergo the cenſure and caſtigation of Almighty God. The dreadful reflection is, that, as the talents committed to their truſt were more and greater than what were beſtowed on others, ſo their perverſion and abuſe of them will make their account and condemnation more ſevere; for a ſharp judgment, ſays the author of the book of Wiſdom [a], ſhall be to them, that are in high places: mercy will ſoon pardon the meaneſt, but mighty men ſhall be mightily tormented. For he, who is Lord over all, ſhall fear no man's perſon, neither ſhall he ſtand in awe of any man's greatneſs; for he hath made the ſmall and great, and careth for all alike: but a ſore trial ſhall come upon the mighty.

UPON this preſumption however, let not the poor man think, that he ſhall be exempted from a future judgment, as if God had entruſted nothing with him. Poor men indeed ſhall not be The poor.

z 2 Pet. ii. 4. a Wiſ. vi. 5, 6, &c.

be examined about their charity, when they had nothing to give; but they ſhall be examined about their thankfulneſs to God, and their benefactors. They ſhall not be obliged to give an account in what manner they uſed the riches which they had not, but they may, and muſt give account, in what manner they bore their poverty; whether it taught them humility and modeſty; patience in want and ſufferings; contentment with a little; ſubmiſſion to the will of God, and a chearful dependence on providence for their daily bread. In ſhort, we are all equally God's creatures; the rich and the poor, the honourable and the vile, the prince and the ſubject are alike unto him: juſtice requires that he ſhould reſpect no man's perſon in judgment; and to convince the world of this, it ſeems reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that he will not only judge us all alike, but judge us all together.

All to be judged together.

THE providence of God in this world is very liable to the charge of partiality; I mean, not only with reference to mens fortune and ſtation in this life, that ſome are rich, and others poor, ſome princes and nobles, others ſlaves and beggars; but in reſpect to their ſouls, viz. That God has not taken equal care to inſtruct all men in their duty, to acquaint them with the danger of ſin, with the certainty of a future judgment, and the eternity of rewards and puniſhments in another life. This indeed is a great difficulty; but the juſtice of the laſt judgment will certainly clear it up: otherwiſe we cannot imagine that God would ſummon all the world together before his tribunal, if he did not intend to deal equally by all. [b] How he will bring theſe differences to an equality is hard for us to ſay; but to make great abatements and allowances for invincible ignorance and miſtakes, for the faults and miſcarriages of education, for the wickedneſs and corruption of the age wherein men live, and for the want of the means of grace and knowledge; to exact improvements proportionable to our receipts, and to thoſe greater advantages we enjoy, and to increaſe and leſſen rewards and puniſhments by theſe meaſures, will in all probability bring men pretty near an equal level. And this indeed is the rule whereby our judge has told us that he will proceed: [c] That ſervant which knew his maſter's will and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes: but he that knew not, and committed things worthy of ſtripes, ſhall be beaten with few ſtripes. For unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will aſk the more.

NOR is it only for the vindication of God's juſtice and impartiality, but for the greater manifeſtation of the righteous, and confuſion of the wicked, that all mankind ſhall be ſummoned to appear, and be judged at once. For ſince many good men have been a ſcorn and deriſion to their neighbours, have done

b Sherlock on Judgment. c Luke xii. 47.

done many good actions in private, which no eye but that of heaven hath seen; and had their sanctity and godliness traduced as an affectation of singularity, or an artful disguise to conceal some latent knavery; it is highly requisite that God should vindicate these men who suffer infamy and reproach for his sake. And what a glorious vindication is this, to have our integrity proclaimed, or our private charity and good offices mentioned, and our prayers and tears, and penitential mournings highly commended and rewarded, in the general assembly of men and angels, if we can but have patience to wait for it? And, on the other hand, though wickedness be many times very glorious and triumphant in this world, concealed from the eyes of men, or gilded over with the form and appearance of godliness; [d] yet when a light shall be struck into all the works of darkness, through all the recesses of subtlety, through all the disguises of hypocrisy; when the mask shall be pulled off from all dissembled virtues, and every vice appear in its proper colours; when these great and arrogant men shall be stripped of their riches, and honours, and power, and see all their admirers and companions trembling for fear of what is coming upon them, as well as themselves despised and scorned by God and his holy angels; it is impossible but that confusion must cover their faces, and their being exposed to the public scorn and censure add a great deal of bitterness to their condemnation. Nay (what will aggravate their shame, as well as prove a farther argument for their appearing before the judgment-seat all at once) it is not unlikely that those who have had any relation, intercourse, or concern in this life; those who have obliged or outraged, reformed or debauched their neighbours, shall be ranged as it were within view, and brought to a re-acquaintance with each other. And if so, where shall the sinner and ungodly appear? How will the unrighteous judge be abashed when he is confronted by such as he has unjustly condemned; and the oppressor turn pale, when he sees those he has harrassed out of their right, and robbed of their ease and satisfaction? What unacceptable company will they be, at this second meeting, who have here been brethren in iniquity, in chambering and wantonness, in strife and envy; who have combined for public violence, and sacrificed whole towns and kingdoms to their private revenge; [e] The Alexanders, and Cæsars, and all Nimrods of the earth, how will they nurse the madness of their ambition, when those thousands of orphans and widows they have made, appear before the throne against them? How will they be astonished, when armies and whole nations of murdered men stand round about, and clamour for vengeance against them? On the contrary, what a reviving sight will it be to meet with those whom we have relieved in necessity, reduced from error, recovered from vice,

d Young's Sermons, Vol. I. e Collier's Sermons.

reſcued from oppreſſion, and defended from unjuſt reproach? ſuch perſons will look like guardian-angels about us, and fortify us againſt the terrors of that dreadful day.

THE ſum then of our argument thus far purſued is this,—[f] That all perſons that ever were upon the face of the earth, none excepted, of what ſex or age, of what rank or quality, of what country or nation, in what times or places ſoever they were born and lived; the greateſt princes and potentates, the deepeſt ſtatesmen and politicians, the moſt learned clerks and diſputers of the world, as well as the moſt ignorant peaſant, or the meaneſt ſlave; in ſhort, all without any diſtinction or exception, without any privilege or reſpect of perſons, ſhall at once appear before the dreadful tribunal, and give an account of themſelves, and their behaviour: for ſo the ſcripture has repreſented the univerſal appearance which perſons of all ranks and conditions muſt make before God, and their vain endeavouring to hide themſelves from it; [g] And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man, hid themſelves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, and ſaid to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to ſtand? And who indeed ſhall be able to ſtand? conſidering,

The future judgment univerſal, as to things

2. THAT the univerſality of this judgment extends not only to all perſons, but to all things. For God, ſays the preacher [h], will bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil; and [i] our Lord, as the apoſtle tells us, will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the heart, and then ſhall every man have praiſe of God.

Our thoughts and intentions.

NOW the true reaſon why the thoughts and intentions of our hearts, as well as our moſt ſecret actions, are to undergo the judgment of the laſt day is, becauſe the formal difference of moral good and evil depends preciſely upon the deſign and intention wherewith the thing was done; inſomuch, that the ſame act in appearance, when proceeding upon different proſpects, and ſpringing from different principles, as to its moral conſideration, is by no means the ſame. Thus one man may give alms out of charity, and another out of oſtentation; one may pray from real devotion to God, and another may do it to be ſeen of men; one may faſt for mortification, and another may do it to acquire the character of an extraordinary abſtemious perſon; both give and faſt, and pray, but becauſe they do it not from the ſame motive, they do not both meet with the ſame acceptance and ſucceſs. He, who does any of theſe upon a worldly principle, hath, as our

[f] Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. II. [g] Rev. vi. 15, &c. [h] Eccleſ. xii. 14. [i] 1 Cor. iv. 5.

ur Lord tells us, [k] his reward already: he did it to be ſeen of en, and ſeen he is: this is coin, wherein he deſired to be paid, nd therefore he hath no claim to any wages beſides. But they ho do theſe things out of a pure conſcience, and to approve eir love and obedience to God, have an ample compenſation reſerve, and ſhall not be loſers at laſt, though no preſent rofit be paid down in hand.

WHY the nature of virtue, and the award of every man's re-ompence ſhould turn upon this point, the reaſon is obvious, ecauſe the power of doing well or ill is not always in our diſpo-l, but the will to do either can never be out of it; and for is we are ſtrictly anſwerable. He that would do ill, but wants eans and opportunity, contracts the ſame guilt as if the thing ad been actually committed; becauſe his mind approves, and onſents to the ſin: and thus the man that [l] looks upon a wo-an to luſt after her, is ſaid to have committed adultery with er in his heart. He that has a ſincere deſire and diſpoſi-ion to do good, but cannot accompliſh it, hath all the merit hich thoſe deſires, when fully effected, could give him: and hus the poor widow's two mites are interpreted a liberality, ar exceeding the gifts of thoſe rich men, [m] who, out of their bundance, caſt in much to the offerings of God.

THAT thus it is, and that thus our intentions ought to be eaſured, the rules of equity and juſtice among men are a plain emonſtration. To kill a man is the ſame act ſimply and ab-ractly conſidered, whether it be done by chance or in one's wn defence, or with malicious purpoſe; but yet the law looks nd animadverts upon it differently with regard to the mind and ntent wherewith the thing is done. In the firſt caſe it is re-uted pitiable and innocent; in the ſecond excuſeable, ſo far as o mitigate the puniſhment; in the laſt it is capital, and ſuch as ught to exclude from all mercy. Now the only reaſon why othing but words and actions are tried and puniſhed here be-ow, is, becauſe the thoughts and imaginations of mens hearts re what we cannot come to the knowledge of, any farther than heir words and actions let us into them: but, in the proceed-ngs of the laſt day, God, no doubt, who is [n] a diſcerner of our houghts, and [o] a ſearcher of our hearts, and an [p] underſtander of our firſt motions and imaginations, will not only expoſe our outward actions to public view and cenſure, but will weigh and examine thoſe ſecret ſprings likewiſe, upon which the very na-ture of every good or evil action principally turns, and accord-ingly determine our doom.

IT is in the antient prophecy of Enoch, as St Jude tells us, Our words,
[q] that the Lord ſhall come, with ten thouſands of his ſaints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly,

not

k Matth. vi. 1, &c. l Ibid. v. 28. m Mark xii. 44. n Heb. iv. 12.
o Pſal. cxxxix. 1. p 1 Theſſ. ii. 4. q Jude 15.

not only of their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, but likewiſe of their hard ſpeeches, which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken againſt him. And indeed, conſidering that words are the firſt and moſt natural indications of the temper and diſpoſitions of the mind; that [r] evil communications of all kind corrupt good manners, and ſome [s] eat like a canker, and prey upon the very vitals of religion; that [t] the tongue, though a little member, defiles the whole body, raiſes great confuſion and diſturbance in neighbourhoods, ſets, as it were, on fire the courſe of nature, and is itſelf ſet on fire of hell: men certainly delude themſelves if they think that all their lewd and filthy talk, all their raſh oaths and imprecations, all their atheiſtical diſcourſe, and profane jeſts upon religion, and the holy ſcriptures; all their calumnies and ſlanders of good men, all their officious lies, to ſerve a preſent turn, or malicious reflections, to do any enemy a diſkindneſs, ſhall paſs for nothing at the judgment of the great day. No; the judge himſelf hath told us, [u] that every idle word (by which, if he means not every unprofitable, he certainly means every wicked word) that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an account thereof in the day of judgment; for by thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned.

Our own, and other mens actions.

NOR ſhall our own perſonal words and works only be brought into judgment, but in many caſes, thoſe of other people, which ſome way or other, either by infuſing wrong principles, or giving evil counſels, by ſetting bad examples, or with-holding neceſſary inſtruction, we have occaſionally made our own. Our bleſſed Saviour, we may obſerve, is very ſharp in his language, and denounces repeated woes againſt the Scribes and Phariſees, who, by their pernicious doctrines, * ſhut up the kingdom of heaven, neither going in themſelves, nor ſuffering them that would enter to go in; who compaſſed ſea and land to make proſelytes, and, when they were made, made them two-fold more the children of hell than themſelves: and St Paul tells us of ſome, in the earlieſt days of chriſtianity, who [x] brought in damnable doctrines, even denying the Lord that bought them; and deluding others to their pernicious ways, occaſioned the way of truth to be evil-ſpoken of: but their judgment, ſaith he, now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation ſlumbereth not. [y] Theſe menaces, it is true, do chiefly concern ſuch ſeducers, and ſet up for gaining proſelytes to infidelity, yet are they applicable to the teachers of all falſe and wicked principles whatever: inſomuch that every doctrine which ſlackens the obligation of God's laws, either by repreſenting good actions not ſo neceſſary, or bad ones not ſo ſinful, as they truly are; which weakens the motives to obedience, by making the

And how we become accountable for them.

r 1 Cor. xv. 33. s 2 Tim. ii. 17. t James iii. 5, 6. u Matth. xii. 36, 37.
* Ibid. xxiii. 13, 15. x 2 Pet. ii. 1, &c. y Smalridge's Sermons.

glories of heaven not so great, or the torments of hell not grievous, as the Spirit of God in the gospel has pronounced m; such doctrine, wherever it is received, has a fatal effi- y towards the corruption of mens manners, and therefore all o teach it have not only a share, but the greatest and most minal share in guilt of those things into which they lead others advancing such principles.

How heinous, how exorbitant, how intolerable the guilt of wing others into sin by evil counsel is in God's sight, we may ge by the severity of that law which he was pleased to ordain inst those who allured their brethren from the service of d to idolatrous worship. [z] If thy brother, the son of thy ther, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, thy friend, which is thine own soul, entice thee secretly, ing, Let us go and serve other gods; thou shalt not consent o him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye y, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, thou shalt surely kill him,—because he hath sought to ust thee away from the Lord thy God. It may be pretended eed, that it is not so great a crime to allure persons to other s as it is to idolatry; [a] yet, since mens souls may as effectually destroyed by an habitual practice of any heinous sin, as by latry itself; since all deadly sin hath in it something of the ure of idolatry, as it draws us from the love of God to the e of the creature; those who by evil counsels allure unwary rsons to the commission of any enormous sin, are to be looked on as seducers, and, at the great day of accounts, will have ir own condemnation aggravated, in proportion as their ked instigations have been prevalent to induce others to the lation of God's commandments.

How much men are apt to be swayed by the example of hers, is obvious to common experience: we learn to live and , as much as we do to speak and write, by imitation: and refore if human nature is so apt to imitate, and to catch the ction, it is plain that all who set ill examples, are, in a great asure, answerable, not for their own personal sins only, but for those sins which others, by their encouragement, com- . [b] Take heed, says the apostle, lest, by any means, this erty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are ak; for when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their ak conscience, ye sin against Christ: now, if those who do ngs in themselves indifferent (for it is of such things that the ostle speaks) may be said to lay a stumbling-block in the way such as, through weakness, may take occasion from thence to things forbidden; if they are accused of destroying their thren, for whom Christ died, of sinning against their brethren, wounding their consciences, and of sinning against Christ; how

z Deut. xiii. 6, &c. a Smalridge's Sermons. b 1 Cor. viii. 9, &c.

how much more deſervedly may this accuſation be brough againſt thoſe who lay ſtumbling-blocks in the ways of other by doing actions notoriouſly and confeſſedly ſinful; actions th will appear evil, not only to ſome, but to all that obſerve them actions that would in themſelves be damnable, though they gav no ſcandal, and are worthy of an heavier judgment, becau they betray others into ſin and damnation.

THERE is one inſtance more, wherein we may become pa takers of other mens ſins, and, conſequently, reſponſible at th judgment-ſeat of Chriſt; and that is, by with-holding ſuch in ſtruction as is neceſſary to the ſalvation of thoſe that depend o us, and becomes our duty to give them: for, if any provide no for his own, and eſpecially for thoſe of his own houſe, he, the judgment of St Paul, hath denied the faith, and is wor than an infidel: in what ſtate and character muſt we look o ourſelves, if we have taken no care to relieve the ſpiritu wants of our children and domeſtics? And how muſt it cut the heart, and pierce to the very ſoul, to have them challeng us in the great day of the Lord, and ſay to us one by on "Had you been as careful to teach me the good knowledge "the Lord as I was capable of learning it; had you but bee "as forward to inſtruct me in any duty as I was ready to hav "hearkened to it; it had not been with me as it is at th "day, I had been in a ſtate of ſalvation, and not ſtood trembli "here in a fearful expectation of my impending doom."

THUS we ſee what the articles are, that on the great day judgment will be exhibited againſt us: [c] that we muſt render account to our great judge for our inward, as well as outwar for our civil, as well as religious actions; for our behaviour t wards men, in our dealing and intercourſe with them; as w as for our demeanor towards God, in the duties of his more i mediate ſervice and worſhip. The neglects and omiſſions our duty in any kind will then come under conſideration, as w as our commiſſions of evil; and a ſtrict account will be exact of all the talents which were intruſted with us, of all the abi ties, opportunities, and advantages, we ever had of doing ſ vice to God, and good to men, and whether we have ma anſwerable improvements of them. Nay, we muſt be accoun able for our thoughts and intentions, as well as our words a actions; and for words and actions of leſs moment and con quence, as well as for thoſe of greater concernment; for th which were done in ſecret, and in the greateſt privacy, as w as for thoſe which were done in public, and in the open view the world; for the good or evil which have been done by ou ſelves, and in our own perſons, as well as what others ha done by our command or inſtigation, the influence of our cou ſel, or the prevalence of our example. All theſe things will ſurveye

[c] Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. III.

veyed, and ſearched into, and weighed in an equal balance, t we may receive a reward or puniſhment proportionable to m. This is the inquiry that we muſt undergo, and this is lot of every one that appears before the judgment-ſeat Chriſt.

An objection. " But if the inquiry is to be ſo minute, and the perſons to be examined, ſo many; if all men that ever have yet, and, for the time to come, ever ſhall live in the world, muſt give an account of their actions, and their circumſtances; of all their words, and their aggravations; of all their thoughts, and their tendencies; all they did, or did not, as they had an opportunity; it is hard to conceive how this can be effected, and eſpecially in the compaſs of one day, as the ſcriptures ſeem to intimate." Anſwered. But how this may be done, we may, ſome meaſure, learn from the operations of our minds.

And how this may be done in one day. When we ſpeak, or think, or act any thing, how come we to remembrance of it, after the thing is done and paſt? Why is not thus? Do not we, by ſeeking, find images of the things have ſpoken, done, or thought of, many years before? Nay, not theſe images frequently preſent themſelves without our king, and make us perceive them, whether we will or no? w this is a plain argument, that theſe images have a real be- and ſubſiſtence within us, that they are independent on our ll; for we cannot eraſe them as we pleaſe, we cannot do it, ould we never ſo fain. Whatever therefore we ſpeak, or do, purpoſe, or deſign, as far as theſe acts are of a moral concern, d bear relation to virtue or vice, we may be ſatisfied that they ve the notices of themſelves upon our conſciences, imprinted characters fair and intelligible, nay, I may add, indelible too. r though we forget many things which we have been con- ous of, yet, in that caſe, the prints and notices of ſuch ngs are not eraſed, but only covered over. Properly ſpeak- indeed, there is no forgetfulneſs in a ſpirit, its forgetfulneſs only accidental, and occaſioned by the impediments of the ſh: and therefore we may reaſonably believe that our ſouls, ether in the ſtate of ſeparation from the body, or of re-union the body, when defecated, and made free from obſtructions, our bodies at the reſurrection ſhall be; we may reaſonably lieve, I ſay, that our ſouls ſhall then have a clear view, and rfect rememembrance of all that we have done, though now ſt of their impreſſions lie in us, like the inſcriptions of a rble, covered over with duſt and rubbiſh.

Now, if conſcience be thus like a written book, and faithful giſter of our behaviour; as there is no room to doubt but t God can read this book, as well as we, and read it through the impediments that ſhade it, which we cannot; ſo he can, hen he pleaſes, make it legible to all others, as well as to our- ſelves;

ſelves: for he can ſo far elevate the underſtanding, and ope the eyes of all men to ſuch a ſpiritual intuition, as that all ſha be able, at a ſhort glance, to read each other's hiſtory, imprint ed in their conſciences in intelligible ſignatures, as familiar ly as if they were graven on their foreheads, or printed i a book. And thus we may probably conceive, that thoſ books (mentioned by the prophet Daniel, and by St John in hi Revelation) that are to be opened in order to the univerſa judgment, are no other than that volume of things recorded i every man's conſcience, which, being opened and expoſed t view, will make a kind of tally or counterpart to that memorial which God himſelf keeps of all we do. By this means the pro ceſs of the great day will aparently be cut ſhort: but we nee not take the word *day* in ſo ſtrict a ſenſe as to reſtrain it to th narrow compaſs of an artificial or natural day, of twelve, or fou and twenty hours: it very often ſignifies [e] a longer period o time, as the whole time of the Iſraelites pilgrimage is called th Day of their Temptation in the Wilderneſs; and therefore w may very ſafely ſuppoſe that the time of Chriſt's holding th grand aſſize, and executing all judicial proceedings, will be of greater extent and duration than one day.

What is meant by a day, and how long the time of judgment may laſt.

If we ſpeak indeed of what he can do, as God, there is n queſtion but as he could have made the world, ſo he can judg it in an inſtant; but it ought to be remembered, that, as he wa pleaſed to take up ſix days in creating it, ſo he will very pro bably be many days in judging the inhabitants of it. Conſider ing indeed, that the whole proceſs of this day is to be ſolem and auguſt, which it cannot be unleſs it be of ſome continuance and that, beſides the trial of all mankind, ſeveral other matter are to be adjuſted; that all the myſterious trains of providenc muſt be unfolded; all neceſſary difficulties cleared; the ſtrang problem, concerning the ſufferings of the righteous, and th proſperity of the wicked, explained, and no objection or ſcruple left unſatisfied; that the decrees and purpoſes of God, whic are not nicely to be ſearched into, and cannot be comprehende now, ſhall then be marvellouſly laid open; and thoſe peculia doctrines of the goſpel, which at preſent are doubted of, and b ſome ridiculed, ſhall then be demonſtrated agreeable to reaſon that many intrigues, and entangled ſcenes of things, whic puzzled the ſobereſt and moſt conſiderate, are then to be diſ cuſſed, and fairly laid open to the full information of th moſt inquiſitive minds: conſidering, I ſay, that Almighty Go

e If we conſult Mr Mede, in the third book of his commentary on the Reve lation, we ſhall be abundantly ſatisfied, that in the New Teſtament likewiſe the word *day* ſignifies a long time, as in Matth. vi. 11. compared with Luk xi. 3. and alſo in John xvi. 26. Nay, we read in 2 Pet. iii. and the laſt verſe the day of eternity, as we find it rendered in the margin of our Bibles, accord ing to the original *hemera aioonos*. But notwithſtanding this, we can hardl be of his opinion, when he extends the day of judgment to a thouſand years and makes it the whole time of the Millennary reign. Lib. IV. p. 841.

s concerned to clear his juſtice and wiſdom, and to make his ajeſty and power known, as well in the cloſing up of the world, s in the creating and preſerving it, to convince all ſinners, be- ore he dooms them, and to ſilence all their objections, before e paſſes a final ſentence upon them; we can hardly forbear con- luding, that the tranſaction of the general judgment will be a ork of conſiderable time, although, in the ſtile of ſcripture, is called no more than a Day. And ſo we proceed in the ext place,

III. To deſcribe the ſolemnity and proceſs of it: and in this he holy ſcriptures have been very particular. They tell us, hat, before the approach of this terrible day, on the earth there ſhall be diſtreſs of nations, with perplexity, the ſea and he waves roaring, and mens hearts failing them for fear, and or looking after thoſe things which are coming; and that, in he heavens, there ſhall be ſigns in the ſun, and in the moon, nd in the ſtars; [f] the ſun ſhall be darkened, the moon ſhall not ive her light, the ſtars ſhall fall from heaven, and all the powers f heaven ſhall be ſhaken: that then ſhall [g] the Son of man ap- ear in a cloud, with power and great glory, coming [h] in his wn glory, and in his Father's, and in his holy angels, whereof thouſands of thouſands ſhall miniſter unto him, and ten thou- and times ten thouſand ſtand before him; and coming [k] in aming fire, to take vengeance on them who know not God, nd obey not the goſpel: that, to this purpoſe, [l] he ſhall ſend is angels, with a great ſound of a trumpet, which ſhall reach rom one end of heaven to the other, and they ſhall gather to- ether the people of all nations, from the four winds; for [m] the ea ſhall give up her dead, and death and hell ſhall deliver up heir dead, which was in them: that, this being done and he aking his ſeat upon [n] a great white throne, even the cloud, whereon he came from heaven, all the dead, both ſmall and reat, ſhall ſtand before him: that, as they appear, the angels hall [o] ſeparate them from one another, even as a ſhepherd di- ideth his ſheep from the goats, the ſheep on the right hand, nd the goats on the left, whereupon the [p] books ſhall be open- d, and the dead judged out of thoſe things which are written n the books; every man according to his works: that the righ- eous ſhall come upon their trial firſt, and, no ſooner ſhall they e acquitted, but their judge ſhall ſay unto them; [q] Come unto ne, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for ou from the beginning of the world; whereupon they ſhall im- ediately be [r] caught up into the clouds, to meet the Lord in he air, and ſo ſhall be ever with the Lord: that the wicked, n the mean time, ſhall ſtand trembling and quaking in horror

The ſolemnity and proceſs of the day of judgment.

[f] Luke xxi. 25, 26. [f] Matth. xxiv. 29. [g] Luke xxi. 17. [h] Ibid. ix. 26. Dan. vii. 10. [k] 2 Theſſ. i. 8. [l] Matth. xxiv. 31. [m] Rev. xx. 13. [n] Ibid. x. 11, 12. [o] Matth. xxv. 32, 33. [p] Rev. xx. 12. [q] Matth. xxv. 34. 1 Theſſ iv. 17.

and amazement at their impending doom, their thoughts accusing them, and * their hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are ready to come upon them; and that, no sooner shall they be arraigned, convicted, and condemned, but their judge shall pronounce their sentence, ' Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; whereupon the whole atmosphere shall be in a blaze about their ears, ' the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works which are therein, shall be burnt up; for the heavens and the earth, which are now, as the apostle tells us, are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.

AND now the Almighty Judge having seen his dread sentence put in execution, will arise from his throne, and thence return to the seat of the blessed, in a solemn and glorious triumph, with all his myriads of angels and saints, who, as they follow him through the air, with loud Hosannas, and triumphant acclamations, will celebrate the praises of their Redeemer; while those other myriads, that are about the throne of the Majesty on High, with songs and magnificats shall congratulate their arrival; for so we read, " and I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah; for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready: blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb!

This is the prospect which the scriptures give us of the order and solemnity of the last judgment, very glorious, and very terrible: but before we come to describe the different resentments of men at this time, according to their different expectations, it may not be amiss to take notice of one or two heightening circumstances of it.

Some particular circumstances of it, as, 1. The coming of the Judge,

1. † WHEN our blessed Saviour came to suffer for the sins of the world, he took upon him the form of a servant, and stooped to the lowest humiliation; being content to bear all the hardships of poverty, the scorns of contempt, the insolence and outrage of power, and malice, and cruelty: but at the end of the world, when he appears to execute judgment upon the ungodly, and to revenge all the injuries done to him, and his servants, he will then assume his own proper greatness, and make his appearance suitable to the dignity of his office. In that day there shall go before him x fire, and vapours, and pillars of smoke, thunderings and lightnings, gloominess and thick darkness, prodigies and fearful sights; the light of the sun shall be put out, the moon

* Luke xxi. 26. s Matth. xxv. 41. t 2 Pet. iii. 10, 17. u Rev. xix. 6, &c.
† Collier's Sermons. x Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. I.

oon turned into blood, the ſtars ſtart from their orbs, and the eavens be ſhrivelled up like a flaming ſcroll, while [y] the earth all tremble and quake, and the very foundations alſo of the hills ake and be removed, becauſe he was wroth. In that day his overeign perfections ſhall ſhine out, and his omnipotence become iſible in opening the graves, in aſſembling all nations and ages f men, and compelling the moſt mighty, and the moſt unwill-g, to obey the unwelcome ſummons. In that day he will ome in his own glory, viz. in a body of a pure and immaculate lendor, with his hair ſhining like threads of light, his eyes arkling with beams of majeſty, his face diſplaying a moſt beau-ful luſtre, and his whole ſubſtance ſhedding forth, from every art, a dazzling glory round about him; for ſuch is the deſcrip-on we have of him in ſcripture: [z] In the midſt of the ſeven andleſticks was one like the Son of man, his head and his hair ere white like wool, as white as ſnow, his eyes were as a flame f fire, and his countenance was like the ſun ſhining in its rength. In that day he will come in his Father's glory: for, hough he will ſtill continue the ſame that he was on earth, yet is divine eſſence will be ſo viſibly prevalent and conſpicuous, hat his human nature will ſeem as it were abſorbed in the ra-iancy of the Godhead, and the majeſty of his preſence become inſupportably great, that (as St John's viſion repreſents it) ature will ſink under it; [a] from his face the earth and the eavens ſhall flee away, and there ſhall be no more place found r them. In that day he will come in the glory of his holy ngels: [b] Thoſe pure and exalted ſpirits, ranged in their hie-rchal order, ſhall be clothed in their robes of ſtate, and diſplay he luſtre and excellencies of their nature, to augment the ſplen-or of his appearance. And now, when all theſe bright and lorious, theſe great and terrible things ſhall meet at once, who ay abide the day of his coming, or ſtand at his appearing? if ne of theſe celeſtial meſſengers is ſo ſurpriſing to us now, what terrible ſpectacle muſt it be, when the curtain between both orlds is drawn, as it were, and all the inhabitants of heaven, nd poſſibly of hell too, preſent themſelves before us? If Daniel, ne ſo remarkable for his courage, for his innocence and virtue, ould not ſuſtain the preſence of one ſingle angel, but was per-ectly ſtupified and overwhelmed with the illuſtrious viſion, how all we bear the united glories of them all? How ſhall we ſup-ort the converſe of the Deity itſelf? of neceſſity God muſt ork a change in his creatures to enable them to ſtand before im; their ſenſes muſt be fortified and refined; their bodies muſt e hardened into a firm and immortal texture, otherwiſe his ery preſence will deſtroy them, and not leave them life enough receive their ſentence, or feel their puniſhment. But,

2. As

[y] Pſalm xviii. 7. [z] Revelation i. 13, 14. [a] Ibid. xx. 11. [b] Collier's rmons.

The raising of the dead.

2. As soon as the great Judge of all the world shall, in this pompous array, descend from heaven, and place his throne in the air, at a convenient distance from the earth; the dead who are told shall be raised, be summoned to appear, tried, and acquitted, or condemned. But, when their resurrection comes, [c] with what horror and reluctancy will bad souls enter into their bodies again, not to enjoy their old sensualities, but to be judged for them; when the very sight of their bodies will call to mind all the villanies they acted in them; when they must appear before their Judge with those very bodies, [d] whose members they made servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity; with eyes full of adultery; with hands stained with blood, with bribes, with rapine; with a blaspheming, a lying, a reviling, a perjured tongue? to unite a soul to such a body again, is like tying a man to his murdered friend, which will both scare his conscience, and poison him with a noisome stench. On the contrary, holy souls will give a better welcome to their bodies; bodies which were preserved pure and clean from all sensual lusts; which were the ready instruments of righteousness and virtue; which were offered up living, holy, and acceptable sacrifices to God; which suffered loss and want, and torment and death, for the sake of Christ. In such bodies as these, good men would desire to be judged, being they are visible testimonies of their faith, and patience, and self-denial; members of Christ, and the temples of the Holy Ghost.

When the wicked, all in one body, come to make their appearance, what a tragical spectacle will it be! [e] An innumerable company of self-condemned wretches, assembled together before the tribunal of an Almighty and implacable Judge, quaking and trembling under the dire expectations of a fearful and irrevocable doom, with weeping eyes, pale looks, and ghastly countenance, aboding the miserable fate that attends them, and [f] crying out to the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, and to hide them from the face of him that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. But on the other hand, what a lovely sight! when the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, the holy church throughout all the world shall meet, and present themselves before their blessed Redeemer; who, looking down from his exalted throne, shall at one view see all the congregation of his saints before him, and with infinite complacency, survey the fruit of the travel of his soul, and the mighty purchase of his most precious blood!

When they shall be brought upon their trial, what inexpressible horror and confusion must seize on those wretched souls which stand convicted by their own consciences; when they shall find all their secret machinations, dark cheats, lewd imagina-

tions

c Sherlock on Judgment. d Rom. vi. 19. e Scott's Mediator. f Rev. vi. 16.

ons, and hypocritical pretences detected and expoſed; when ey ſhall ſee themſelves publicly unmaſked, and forced to ſtand rth, like ſo many loathſome ſpectacles, before God and his ngels, without any excuſe or retreat for their ſhame, without y vail to hide their infamy and bluſhes! But, on the con-ary, how muſt the righteous lift up their heads with joy, hen not only their innocence ſhall be vindicated, and that in-my and ſcandal wherewith their enemies beſpattered them, blicly wiped off; but all thoſe brave and unaffected acts of cret piety and charity, to which none but God and themſelves ere conſcious, ſhall be brought into open light, and, to their verlaſting renown, proclaimed through all the vaſt aſſembly ſpirits!

LASTLY, when ſentence ſhall be paſſed upon them, [g] what orrible outcries and lamentations will be heard among thoſe at are condemned! for if, a *Take him jailor*, from an earthly dge, be able to extort ſo many ſighs and tears from a criminal ere, what will a *Go ye curſed* do, from the mouth of the righ-eous Judge of all the world? as on the contrary, no ſooner all the ſentence of the righteous be pronounced, but imme-iately will reſound joyful acclamations through heaven and arth, [h] Hallelujah, ſalvation, and glory, and power be to the ord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments. Salvation to our Lord that ſitteth on the throne, and to the amb; [k] for wonderful are thy works, O Lord God Almighty; uſt and true are thy ways, O thou King of ſaints!

3. As ſoon as theſe ſentences are paſſed, there is this one rcumſtance more, to heighten the terror of that day, and that , the diſmal change and conflagration which will happen to the orld. That the world ſhall at laſt be deſtroyed by fire, has een a tradition of very antient date, and what probably came rom Noah [l] at firſt, and ſo deſcended to his poſterity; becauſe e meet with no nation [m] whether civil or barbarous, but what univerſally

The conflagration of the world.

g Scott's Mediator. h Rev. xix. 1. i Ibid. vii. 10. k Ibid xv. 3.

l In the firſt ages of the world after the flood, when Noah and his children eopled the earth again, as he gave precepts of morality and piety for the con-uct of their manners, which are uſually called, Præcepta Noachidarum, fre-uently mentioned by the Jews and Chriſtians, ſo alſo he delivered to them ertain maxims and concluſions about providence, the ſtate of nature, and the ate of the world; and theſe, in proportion, may be called, Dogmata Noachida-um, the Doctrines of Noah and his children, which made a ſyſtem of philoſo-hy, or ſecret knowledge among them, delivered by tradition from father to on, but eſpecially preſerved among their prieſts or ſacred perſons, or ſuch thers as were addicted to contemplation. Burnet's Theory, Vol. II.

m That the Romans, who had their learning from the Grecians, were of this pinion, is plain from thoſe well-known verſes of Ovid:

Eſſe quoque in fatis reminiſcitur, affore tempus,
Quo mare, quo tellus, correptaque regia cœli
Ardeat, & mundi moles operoſa laboret. Metam.

Among the Egyptians (as Plato in his Timæus tells) it was the doctrine of their rieſts, that the fatal cataſtrophes of the world were by fire and water. The erſians made their beloved God, Fire, at length to conſume all things that are capable

universally believed it. And therefore we need less wonder that we find the holy scriptures so clear and express in such assertions as these; [n] That Christ will descend from heaven in a flaming fire, to take vengeance on those that know not God; that [o] his throne shall be like the fiery flame, his wheels as burning fire, and a fiery stream shall issue and come forth before him; and that then [p] the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be dissolved. But then by what natural causes this great catastrophe is to be wrought, whether by a nearer approach of the sun to the earth, or by an eruption of the central fire, or by a certain preparation of the combustible stores which the earth and the air contain; as well as [q] how far this conflagration will extend, whether to the ætherial heavens, and all the host of them, or to the aerial only, is not so material to be contested here; since it is agreed on all hands, that the conflagration will not be effected without the particular order and appointment of God.

Of what use the burnings and vulcanoes which are upon the face of the earth, the minerals, and mineral juices, and concretions, capable of inflammation, within the bowels of it, as well as the meteors and exhalations which are engendered and formed in the air, will be to set the world on fire, [r] a learned and ingenious inquirer has abundantly evinced, concluding his inquiry with this observation, "That in general there is a great "analogy between two deluges, that which has been of water, "and

capable of being consumed: and the Chaldeans (as we have it from Berosus, in Seneca's Nat. Quæst.) not only taught the conflagration, but also fixed it to a certain period of time, when there should happen a great conjunction of the planets in Cancer, &c. Burnet, ibid. All sects of philosophers indeed, but the Aristotelians, who held the heavens to be incorruptible, embraced the notion of the world's conflagration; but then their opinion of it differed very much from that of Christians. The Stoics and Epicureans held it to be, not a consumption, but a purgation, and restoration of the world: the Platonists held, that there should be a successive renovation of all things, after certain intervals and revolutions; this was called by them, *periodike paliggenesia*, a periodical regeneration; for they held, that after a certain return of years, all things should perish by fire, and then there should succeed a restitution, or restoration of them, and that innumerable such renovations and successions should happen to the universe. So that these Gentiles were not of the same opinion with Christians, who acknowledge only one single conflagration; and yet we may observe, that both our Saviour and his apostle St Peter have made use of the very same terms, which the philosophers did, whereby to express this universal burning. Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I.

n 2 Thess. i. 8. o Dan. vii. 9, 10. p 2 Pet. iii. 10, 12. q Ray's Physico Theological Discourses.

r Burnet, ibid. c. vii. The things above-named may indeed contribute somewhat towards a general conflagration, but the first and principal cause, if I mistake not, is, that the heavenly bodies shall be put into unspeakable disorder; for, as our Saviour himself tells us, the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken; upon which preternatural concussion, there will be a strange confusion among the starry bodies, which, like fire out of its place, will do infinite mischief; first set the upper regions on fire, and afterwards those below. Edwards, ibid.

and that which will be of fire; that as at the former, the windows of heaven were opened above, and the abyſs was opened below, and the waters of theſe two joined together to overflow the world; ſo at the conflagration God will rain down fire from heaven, as he did once upon Sodom, and, at the ſame time, the ſubterraneous ſtore-houſes of fire will be broken open, which anſwers to the diſruption of the abyſs; and theſe two, meeting and mingling together, will involve the earth, and the elemental heavens in flames."

A deſcription of it.

IMAGINE all nature then ſtanding in expectation to receive its oom, the deſtroying angels having their inſtructions, and every ing ready for the fatal hour; upon our Lord's giving the ſignal, l the ſublunary world breaking into flames, the treaſures of re opening in heaven, and the ſtores of vengeance which are dged in the heart of the earth (thoſe ſprings of fire which have ed Ætna and Veſuvius for ſo many ages) exhauſting their rength at once, and rending whole countries into pieces at eir eruption; every element, and every region, as far as the ounds of the fire extend, in a tumult and a fury; the whole abitable world diſſolving into its firſt chaos, and rolling in temeſtuous confuſion; and whereunto can we liken the dreadfulneſs of this ſcene, or with what compariſon can we compare it? The moſt aſtoniſhing thing in this world ſeems to be the battering and ſtorming of a town, where there is nothing to be heard ut the roaring of cannons, and the ſhrieks of the vanquiſhed; where the ſtreets are cracking in flames, and ſtrewed with carcaſſes of the ſlain; where all places are filled with ſmoke and lood, with deſpair and deſolation. But alas! this is but a faint mage, a very imperfect reſemblance of that devaſtation, miſery nd terror, which will accompany the final period, when the aſt and fatal aſſault ſhall be made upon the globe at once; when he whole frame of things ſhall be torn and disjointed with temeſts, and thunder, and earthquakes; when iſlands and continents hall be daſhed againſt each other, and ſea and land thrown out f all diſtinction, and ſhuffled into a wild maſs of diſorder.

How vain (may we ſay upon this occaſion) and tranſient is he glory of all this habitable world, when by the force of one lement breaking looſe upon the reſt, all that we admired and dored before, as great and magnificent, is obliterated and vaniſhed! "Where are now the great empires of the world, and "their great imperial cities? their pillars, trophies, and monu"ments of glory? ſhew me where they ſtood: read the inſcrip"tion: tell me the victor's name. What remains, what im"preſſions, what difference and diſtinction do you ſee in this "maſs of fire? but it is not cities only, and the works of mens "hands, but the everlaſting hills, the mountains and rocks of "the earth are melted, as wax before the ſun, and their place "is

s Vid. Burnet's Theory, Vol. II. and Collier's Sermons.

" is no where found. Here ſtood the Alps, a prodigious range
" of ſtone, the load of the earth, that covered many countries,
" and reached their arms from the ocean to the black ſea; this
" huge maſs of ſtone is ſoftened and diſſolved, as a tender cloud
" into rain. Here ſtood the African mountains, and Atlas with
" its top above the clouds: there was the frozen Caucaſus, and
" Taurus, and Imaus, and the mountains of Aſia; and yonder
" towards the north, ſtood the Riphœan hills, clothed in ice
" and ſnow. All theſe are vaniſhed and dropped away, as the
" ſnow upon their heads, and ſwallowed up in a red-ſea of fire."
[t] Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty;
juſt and true are thy ways, thou King of ſaints.

Mens different ſentiments upon the coming of the day of judgment.

AND if the day of judgment, and the things to be done thereon, are ſo terrible in contemplation, think, O think, what a tumult of diſorder and confuſion muſt fill our minds, when we ſee them actually executed. What terrors and diſtraction will then ſeize thoſe guilty breaſts, whom this day overtakes, as we are told it ſhall do many, unawares: not unawares, for want of ſufficient warning, much might be then alledged in their excuſe, but unawares, for want of neceſſary preparation, and attending to that warning which leaves no room for apologies? [u] What thoughts will then ſtart up, and force themſelves upon thoſe obſtinate, thoſe diſſolute ſons of pleaſure and vanity, who, in defiance of their baptiſmal vows and better education, make ſuch a jeſt of a crucified God, and laugh at the threatenings of him judging the world, as a fable deviſed to keep ſilly ſouls in awe, the artifice of politicians, and the talk of churchmen? What a diſmal change will then enſue, when the inſolent mockeries of God and his wiſe diſpenſations, the vain burleſques of ſcripture, and that filthy nauſeous froth, which is now thought to give ſuch a reliſh to converſation, ſhall ſink into fruitleſs confeſſions of truth found too late; when every blaſphemous tongue ſhall be ſtruck dumb with guilt and deſpair, and in the place of loud laughter at the moſt ſacred things, ſhall ſucceed weeping and wailing, trembling knees, wringing hands, and gnaſhing teeth, thenceforth and forever?

WHAT hills will the profane ſwearers call to fall upon them, what mountains to cover them, when he, whoſe blood and wounds have been ſo wantonly toſſed upon their tongues, ſhall come in flaming fire, to revenge theſe rude affronts of his moſt holy name and ſufferings? Nay, where ſhall even thoſe, in compariſon, modeſt ſinners ſtand, who in words are content to own the Lord, when in works they too palpably deny and diſcredit, at leaſt, a religion which they do not profeſſedly diſclaim? The intemperate and laſcivious, the greedy worldlings, and glittering great ones, that ſpend their time and wealth in vice and vanity, muſt then render a ſtrict account, not only how they got, but how

[t] Rev. xv. 3. [u] Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels. Vol. I.

how they employed their poſſeſſions; and be pierced through and through with this ſtabbing reflection,—That the riches which they ſquandered away in ſtately buildings, coſtly apparel, numerous equipage, and worldly grandeur, are now become inſtruments of their ruin; which, if expended in cloathing the naked, and feeding the hungry members of Chriſt, might have opened them a paſſage into everlaſting habitations of bliſs and glory. [y] Here indeed the paſſions of the ſoul do in a great meaſure ſleep, and are heavy and languid for want of objects ſtrong enough to call them up; but heaven and hell, when they are once in view, and are preſented to our ſenſes, are ſuch mighty moving things, as will be ſure to awaken the powers of the moſt lethargic mind, and raiſe all the force and paſſions of nature to the utmoſt degree. When men can ſhelter themſelves no longer in infidelity, but are forced to believe they are loſt for ever; when they are powerfully convinced that fire, and fiends, and eternity are the diſmal ingredients of their puniſhment; when damnation ſtands before them, and the intolerable ſentence is ready to be executed; what inexpreſſible agonies will they then fall into, what amazement and exceſs of horror muſt then ſeize upon them? Nothing certainly, but the puniſhment itſelf, can be more aſtoniſhing than the dread of it, at ſo near a diſtance.

But praiſed be the divine mercy for it, there is a bright ſide of this judgment too. [x] For though it cannot be ſuppoſed that the very beſt of mortals can look ſtedfaſtly on this tribunal, and all its terrible pomp, without any manner of miſgiving or concern; yet, if they look up to Jeſus, that lamb ſlain to take away the ſins of the world, the apprehenſions of a judgment will be tempered with hope, and holy truſt in his ſacrifice; and the plagues and fears, which wound the wicked mortally, fly over the good man's head, and not one of them touches him. The good man can behold the glories and triumphs of infinite mercy in the Son of God, now bright and all divine, once condeſcending ſo low as to die for his ſake: he can depend upon all fair allowances for infirmities and temptations from one who hath felt the weakneſs of human nature in his own perſon; inſomuch, that were he allowed the liberty to chuſe his own judge, prudence and intereſt would direct him to ſuch an one as is infinitely good in his own nature, and has been inexpreſſibly kind to him. He looks upon judgment therefore as the pardon of his tranſgreſſions, the recompence of his ſufferings, his ſpeedy and intire deliverance from danger and temptations, from corruption and mortality, and (what is more than all) from frailty and imperfections, and the very poſſibility of ſinning any more. He looks upon it as the renewal and glorification of his nature, when his body ſhall be transformed into beauty, and vigour,

[y] Collier's Sermons. [x] Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels, Vol. I.

" is no where found. Here ſtood the Alps, a prodigious range " of ſtone, the load of the earth, that covered many countries, " and reached their arms from the ocean to the black ſea; this " huge maſs of ſtone is ſoftened and diſſolved, as a tender cloud " into rain. Here ſtood the African mountains, and Atlas with " its top above the clouds: there was the frozen Caucaſus, and " Taurus, and Imaus, and the mountains of Aſia; and yonder, " towards the north, ſtood the Riphœan hills, clothed in ice " and ſnow. All theſe are vaniſhed and dropped away, as the " ſnow upon their heads, and ſwallowed up in a red-ſea of fire." [t] Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, juſt and true are thy ways, thou King of ſaints.

Mens different ſentiments upon the coming of the day of judgment.

AND if the day of judgment, and the things to be done thereon, are ſo terrible in contemplation, think, O think, what a tumult of diſorder and confuſion muſt fill our minds, when we ſee them actually executed. What terrors and diſtraction will then ſeize thoſe guilty breaſts, whom this day overtakes, as we are told it ſhall do many, unawares: not unawares, for want of ſufficient warning, much might be then alledged in their excuſe, but unawares, for want of neceſſary preparation, and attending to that warning which leaves no room for apologies? [u] What thoughts will then ſtart up, and force themſelves upon thoſe obſtinate, thoſe diſſolute ſons of pleaſure and vanity, who, in defiance of their baptiſmal vows and better education, make ſuch a jeſt of a crucified God, and laugh at the threatenings of his judging the world, as a fable deviſed to keep ſilly ſouls in awe, the artifice of politicians, and the talk of churchmen? What a diſmal change will then enſue, when the inſolent mockeries of God and his wiſe diſpenſations, the vain burleſques of ſcripture, and that filthy nauſeous froth, which is now thought to give ſuch a reliſh to converſation, ſhall ſink into fruitleſs confeſſions of truth found too late; when every blaſphemous tongue ſhall be ſtruck dumb with guilt and deſpair, and in the place of loud laughter at the moſt ſacred things, ſhall ſucceed weeping and wailing, trembling knees, wringing hands, and gnaſhing teeth, thenceforth and forever?

WHAT hills will the profane ſwearers call to fall upon them, what mountains to cover them, when he, whoſe blood and wounds have been ſo wantonly toſſed upon their tongues, ſhall come in flaming fire, to revenge theſe rude affronts of his moſt holy name and ſufferings? Nay, where ſhall even thoſe, in compariſon, modeſt ſinners ſtand, who in words are content to own the Lord, when in works they too palpably deny and diſcredit, at leaſt, a religion which they do not profeſſedly diſclaim? The intemperate and laſcivious, the greedy worldlings, and glittering great ones, that ſpend their time and wealth in vice and vanity, muſt then render a ſtrict account, not only how they got, but how

[t] Rev. xv. 3. [u] Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels. Vol. I.

how they employed their poſſeſſions; and be pierced through and through with this ſtabbing reflection,—That the riches which they ſquandered away in ſtately buildings, coſtly apparel, numerous equipage, and worldly grandeur, are now become inſtruments of their ruin; which, if expended in cloathing the naked, and feeding the hungry members of Chriſt, might have opened them a paſſage into everlaſting habitations of bliſs and glory. * Here indeed the paſſions of the ſoul do in a great meaſure ſleep, and are heavy and languid for want of objects ſtrong enough to call them up; but heaven and hell, when they are once in view, and are preſented to our ſenſes, are ſuch mighty moving things, as will be ſure to awaken the powers of the moſt lethargic mind, and raiſe all the force and paſſions of nature to the utmoſt degree. When men can ſhelter themſelves no longer in infidelity, but are forced to believe they are loſt for ever; when they are powerfully convinced that fire, and fiends, and eternity are the diſmal ingredients of their puniſhment; when damnation ſtands before them, and the intolerable ſentence is ready to be executed; what inexpreſſible agonies will they then fall into, what amazement and exceſs of horror muſt then ſeize upon them? Nothing certainly, but the puniſhment itſelf, can be more aſtoniſhing than the dread of it, at ſo near a diſtance.

But praiſed be the divine mercy for it, there is a bright ſide of this judgment too. × For though it cannot be ſuppoſed that the very beſt of mortals can look ſtedfaſtly on this tribunal, and all its terrible pomp, without any manner of miſgiving or concern; yet, if they look up to Jeſus, that lamb ſlain to take away the ſins of the world, the apprehenſions of a judgment will be tempered with hope, and holy truſt in his ſacrifice; and the plagues and fears, which wound the wicked mortally, fly over the good man's head, and not one of them touches him. The good man can behold the glories and triumphs of infinite mercy in the Son of God, now bright and all divine, once condeſcending ſo low as to die for his ſake: he can depend upon all fair allowances for infirmities and temptations from one who hath felt the weakneſs of human nature in his own perſon; inſomuch, that were he allowed the liberty to chuſe his own judge, prudence and intereſt would direct him to ſuch an one as is infinitely good in his own nature, and has been inexpreſſibly kind to him. He looks upon judgment therefore as the pardon of his tranſgreſſions, the recompence of his ſufferings, his ſpeedy and intire deliverance from danger and temptations, from corruption and mortality, and (what is more than all) from frailty and imperfections, and the very poſſibility of ſinning any more. He looks upon it as the renewal and glorification of his nature, when his body ſhall be transformed into beauty, and vigour,

* Collier's Sermons. × Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels, Vol. I.

and immortality; his ſoul be likened to the divine excellencies; every power and faculty enlarged; and himſelf, from thenceforth, ſeeing, admiring, praiſing, loving, living, and reigning with his Lord for ever. And for theſe reaſons he looks upon thoſe things which are coming upon the earth with unconcern; and can behold a flaming world, and all the things that are conſumed therein, without uneaſineſs or regret; becauſe he knows he has a more abiding city, [y] whoſe builder and maker is God; and [z] an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for him.

Concerning the time of the future judgment, and whether known to Chriſt and angels.

IV. AFTER our Saviour had been diſcourſing to his diſciples concerning the future judgment, and foretelling the ſeveral ſigns which ſhould precede it, we find him concluding with this declaration, [a] but of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only; whence ſome concluded it to be one of thoſe times and ſeaſons which the Father hath put in his power, and, conſequently, that it is a kind of impiety to make any ſearch into the particular period of it: whilſt others have been ſo little apprehenſive of any danger herein, that they have purſued their inquiries far enough to imagine that they have attained to an exact computation of it. It ſeems not a little ſtrange however (whatever we may think of thoſe celeſtial miniſters who continually behold the face of God, and are to make up the train of the judge when he cometh) it ſeems not a little ſtrange, I ſay, that the Son of God, who came from the boſom of his Father, and was therefore intimately acquainted with his counſels; that he whom God hath ordained to be the judge of the world, and who knew his office, and the time of its commencing ſo well, that he certainly predicted ſeveral fore-runners of it: nay, that he in whom all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, and all the divinity does ſubſtantially reſide, ſhould not be acquainted with the time of this judgment; and therefore to ſolve this difficulty, ſeveral interpretations of this text have been deviſed. [b] Some diſtinguiſh between Chriſt's human and divine nature, and thereupon argue that though he knew of the day of judgment as God, yet he was not acquainted with it as man; for they readily ſuppoſe that the divine wiſdom, which dwelt in our Saviour, did not communicate itſelf to his human ſoul ſo fully, but that his human nature might, at certain times, be ignorant of ſome particular things. Others, conſidering Chriſt in the capacity of a prophet, ſent into the world to reveal his Father's will, and thereupon delivering, not all that his Godhead knew, but only what the Spirit of God thought fit to reveal, have thence inferred, that as he ſpake nothing of himſelf, but only as the Father, which ſent him, gave him commandment what he ſhould ſpeak; and ſo the knowledg

y Heb. xi. 10. z 1 Pet. i. 4. a Mark xiii. 32. b Tillotſon's Sermon

knowledge of the day and hour of the final judgment being no part of his prophetic office, as the Son of man, and as barely the meſſenger and miniſter of God, he knew nothing of it. The words *oudeis oiden*, which we render knoweth no man, ſome have imagined, might properly enough ſignify, no perſon revealeth or maketh known; and thence they ſuppoſe, that though the angels might, and our bleſſed Saviour certainly did know the time of the coming of the day of judgment; yet God, in his great mercy to mankind, and for reaſons hereafter mentioned, laid a reſtriction upon them, that they might not make it known.

c In which ſoever of theſe ſenſes we underſtand our bleſſed Saviour's words, we cannot from them deduce any inferiority in his Godhead, or any ignorance in him, with regard to the time when the laſt judgment is to commence. And though, when our Saviour ſpake theſe words, the angels might not be able to ſee through all events to the end of the world, and, conſequently, be ignorant of the preciſe time of the judgment-day; yet it does not therefore follow, that they do not know it now, when, in the courſe of almoſt ſeventeen hundred years, many things are come to paſs, that may be marks and directions to them, to make judgment of what remains, and of the laſt period of things.

What inquiry ſeveral people have made into the day of judgment.

Some of the antient aſtronomers pretended to calculate the end of the world from the fixed ſtars, and the firmament. They ſuppoſed that theſe bodies, beſides the hurry of their diurnal motion from eaſt to weſt, quite round the earth, in four and twenty hours, had another retrogade motion from weſt to eaſt, which moves ſlow and leiſurely; and that, when they have finiſhed this circle of retrogradation, and come up again to the ſame place from whence they ſet out at the beginning of the world, then this courſe of nature will be at an end: but, as this fiction of a ſolid firmament, upon which this hypotheſis relies, has been long ſince exploded, and the ſtars been found not to be fixed in one ſurface, or at an equal diſtance from the earth, but placed in ſeveral orbs, higher and higher, to fill and beautify the immenſe ſpaces of the univerſe, ſo have they

c Excellent to this purpoſe are the words of Dr Lightfoot. "It is one thing, ſays he, to underſtand the Son of God, barely and abſtractly, for the ſecond Perſon in the holy Trinity; another, to underſtand him for the Meſſias, or the ſecond perſon incarnate. To ſay that there is any thing which the ſecond Perſon of the Trinity knows not, is blaſphemous; to ſay ſo of the Meſſias, is not ſo; who, nevertheleſs, was the ſame with the ſecond Perſon in the Trinity. For although the ſecond Perſon, abſtractly conſidered, according to his mere Deity, was co-equal with the Father, co-omnipotent, co-omniſcient, co-eternal with him, &c. yet Meſſias, who was God-man, conſidered as Meſſias, was a ſervant and a meſſenger of the Father, and received commands and authority from him. So that thoſe expreſſions, The Son can do nothing of himſelf, &c. will not in the leaſt ſerve the Arian turn, if you take them in this ſenſe, which you muſt neceſſarily do, *i. e.* the Meſſias can do nothing of himſelf, becauſe he is a ſervant and a deputy." In Locum. d Burnet's Theory, Vol. II.

they no motion common to them all, nor any motion ſingly, unleſs upon their own centres: and therefore, as they never leave their ſtations, ſo they can never return to that common ſtation, which, as theſe men imagined, they had at the beginning of the world; and, conſequently, this grand period, whereby they pretend to meaſure the world's duration, is purely chimerical, and deſtitute of any foundation, in the true nature and motion of celeſtial bodies.

THE Jews have a remarkable prophecy among them, [e] of a very antient date, and wherewith [f] ſeveral fathers of the chriſtian church ſeem to be ſatisfied, viz. that the world ſhall ſtand for ſix thouſand years, which they diſtribute into this order, two thouſand before the law; two thouſand under the law; and two thouſand under the Meſſiah. But [g] the great difference of computation between the Hebrew copies and the Septuagint, which amounts to more than thirteen hundred years, how long a time it is ſince the world firſt began, makes it impoſſible to draw any certain concluſion, even ſuppoſing the prophecy to be true, how long it will be before it ends. The Samaritan copy of the Pentateuch ſeems to moderate between theſe two; but even taking them all together, we are ſtill at the ſame loſs, and left only to multiply our conjectures; which made [h] a very great inquirer into this period, propoſe it as a conſideration to the pious, ſober, and judicious; "whether, with all "due

e This prophecy is called Traditio Domus Eliæ: but then there were two of this name, Elias the Theſbite, and Elias the Rabbin or Cabaliſt, and it is ſuppoſed to belong immediately to the latter of theſe: yet this does not hinder but that it might come originally from the former Elias. It might be preſerved in the ſchool of this Elias the Rabbin, and firſt made public by him; or perhaps he might add that diviſion of the time into three parts, and ſo get a title to the whole. For I cannot eaſily imagine that a Doctor, who lived two hundred years, or thereabouts, before Chriſt, when all prophecy had ceaſed for many ages among the Jews, ſhould take upon him to dictate a prophecy, about the duration of the world, unleſs he had been ſupported by ſome antecedent tradition, which being kept more ſecret before he took the liberty to make it public, came by that means to be fathered on him. Nor can it be ſuppoſed but that the old prophet Elias was a very proper perſon to be inſpired with the knowledge, and to tell the firſt news of that fatal period, ſince we are told (Mal. iv. 5, 6) that he is to come again, and bring the firſt alarm of it. Burnet's Theory, Vol. II.

f Of this opinion was St Barnabas (Epiſt. Cath. c. xv.) where he argues that the creation will be ended in ſix thouſand years, as it was finiſhed in ſix days, every day, according to the ſacred and myſtical account, anſwering to a thouſand years. Of the ſame judgment were Irenæus, Lib. V. c. xviii. Hippolitus his diſciple, as we may ſee in Photius, c. ccii. Lactantius in his Divine Inſtitutions, Lib. VII. c. xiv. Cyprian in his Exhortation to Martyrdom, c. xi. And the author of the Queſtions and Anſwers, ad Orthodoxos, in Juſtin Martyr, who tells us, that from ſeveral places in ſcripture, we may conjecture that thoſe are in the right who ſay ſix thouſand years is the time prefixed for the duration of this preſent frame of things. Burnet, ibid.

g Mede's Works, Lib. V. Where he ſuppoſes that the ſeventy interpreters, tranſlating, as they did, in Egypt, might voluntarily, and on ſet-purpoſe, increaſe the years of the firſt generations, which he makes to be thoſe not before, but after the flood, in order to make them reach the antiquity of ſome ſtories of the Egyptians, and thereby exceeded the Hebrew computation above 1300 years. h Mede, ibid.

due reverence to the divine writ, there may not be ſome ſe-cret diſpoſition of divine providence in this variety of com-putation, to prevent our curioſity, in counting the exact time of the day of judgment, and ſecond appearing of Chriſt; and that, as the ambitious tower of Babel was hindered by the confuſion of languages, ſo whether our curioſity, in this par-ticular, be not, by a like providence, prevented, by ſuch a di-verſity of computations."

The prophecies which God has given us of it.

SEVERAL of the antient prophets have, in ſeveral places, etold the converſion and reſtoration of the Jews, as previous the conſummation of all things. But alas! what appear-ce is there of this in the preſent ſituation of affairs? And at judgment can we make of a ſign that is not yet come to ſs? Our bleſſed Saviour has likewiſe foretold us of ſeveral orders in the natural world, as fore-runners of his coming to dgment: but theſe being the very pangs of death, and ſtrugglings nature, as it were, before her diſſolution, it will be too e to be aware of our ruin, when it is thus knocking at our or. The laſt revelation we are to expect, is the apocalypſe St John, wherein are ſeveral prophecies which reach to the nclusion of the world. The ſeven ſeals, the ſeven trumpets, e ſeven vials, do all terminate upon that great period; but en theſe are hiſtorical, not chronological prophecies: they tell , in their language, the events, but do not expreſs the time herein they come to paſs: and though others there are that ay be called chronological, ſuch as [i] the treading under foot e holy city, forty and two months; [k] the witneſſes oppoſing ntichriſt, one thouſand two hundred and ſixty days; [l] the ght of the woman into the wilderneſs for a time, times, and lf a time; and [m] the war of the beaſt againſt the ſaints, forty-vo months; yet, even admitting that ſome of theſe extend (as do not) to the end of the world, ſince we do not certainly now where to fix their beginning, even though we were greed as to the things themſelves, we muſt ſtill be at a loſs, hen, or in what year, they will expire. The beſt conjectures deed that can be made concerning this matter, muſt be taken om a judicious examination of theſe points; and according as e gather up the prophecies of this revelation, in a ſucceſſive mpletion, we may ſee how by degrees we draw nearer and earer to the concluſion of all: but till ſome of theſe prophe-es are accompliſhed, we are like a man that awakes in the ight, and knows not how far it is ſpent, until the light appears, nd the firſt glimpſe of that reſolves his doubts.

That the apoſtles, in their days, did not think it near at hand.

THUS we have examined the obſervations which men have ade, and the prophecies which God hath given us concerning e laſt day, and muſt ſtill remain ignorant of the time of its oming. "And well may we be ſuppoſed to be ignorant, "when

[i] Rev. xi. 2. [k] Ibid. ver. 3. [l] Ibid. xii. 14. [m] Ibid. xiii. 5.

" when the apoſtles themſelves, as ſome imagine, were ſo groſs-
" ly miſtaken in their computation, that they verily believed
" themſelves ſhould have lived to be ſpectators of the world's
" cataſtrophe, and that the ſecond coming of Chriſt was not to
" be deferred much beyond the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, as
" their words and exhortations ſeem to import." [n] It cannot be denied indeed, but that, at the beginning, and firſt ſetting out of the goſpel, ſome of theſe holy men were guilty of miſtakes, and ſufficiently diſcovered their erroneous ſurmiſes; but, after the Holy Ghoſt was ſent in an extraordinary manner to enlighten them, and its office was to teach them all things, even ſuch things as they were not able to bear before; it is impoſſible that they ſhould conceive any error, much more commit it to writing, or that they ſhould teach any falſe doctrine, or delude their fellow-chriſtians with falſe hopes and encouragements, as they muſt have done, had this been their real perſuaſion. [o] For if, when St Paul tells the Corinthians, [p] Brethren, the time is ſhort, and the faſhion of this world paſſeth away, he ſpeaks not of the time of human life, and the relation men have to the world, and the world to them, but of Chriſt's coming to judgment, and the deſtruction of all things here on earth; if, when he tells the Hebrews, [q] yet a little while, and he that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry, he means this, not of Chriſt's coming to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and of the Jewiſh ſtate and nation, but of his coming to the final judgment, he certainly teaches falſe doctrine, and endeavours to ſupport them with falſe hopes which cannot but impair his credit in other matters. If therefore the apoſtle may be allowed to explain his own meaning, he has, in another place, given us a full interpretation of it, which we find him introducing in this ſolemn manner. [r] Now we beſeech you, brethren, *tes parouſias*, not by, but concerning the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and our gathering together unto him, that ye be not ſoon ſhaken in mind, or troubled, neither by ſpirit, *i. e.* any pretended revelation, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Chriſt is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day ſhall not come; except there came a falling away firſt, and that man of ſin be revealed, the ſon of perdition: which plainly enough ſhews, that the apoſtle diſowned any ſuch doctrine himſelf, and accounted thoſe deceivers, who did inſinuate it. When therefore he tells the Corinthians, [s] we ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall all be changed in a moment; and in like manner, when he tells the Theſſalonians, [t] we, that are alive, and remain unto the coming of our Lord, ſhall not prevent them which are aſleep; it is perverting his ſenſe to apply theſe paſ-

ſages

n Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. o Whitby on 2 Cor. v. 9. p 1 Cor. vii. 29, 31. q Heb. x. 37. r 2 Theſſ. ii. 2, &c. s 1 Cor. xv. 51. t 1 Theſſ. iv. 15.

es to himself, and the christians then in being, which have plain a reference to christians in all ages; or to infer from em the surviving of that generation to the coming of our ord, when his meaning is apparently no more than this,—That ey (whosoever they be) who shall be alive at the general re-rrection, shall undergo a change instead of death.

The reasons for their expressing themselves as they did.

We can hardly suppose that the apostles were so little versed the writings of Ezekiel, Daniel, and the rest of the prophets, pecially when our Saviour had expounded the scriptures to em, and taught them [u] the things pertaining to the kingdom God after his resurrection; as to think that the gospel-state ould not continue one century. St Paul, in particular, tells , that he expected a general apostacy, and the revelation of ntichrist, before the great day; and St Peter, to engage their tience and perseverance, desires that the christians, in his days, ight * not be ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with e Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. heir persecutions it is likely, which were very heavy upon em, caused them to wish for some sudden deliverance, and in-ined them to believe that Christ would speedily come to take engeance on their adversaries; and therefore, [x] since the time judgment was uncertain and unknown, it was but fit that the ifer course should be taken, and that men should rather be armed into sudden and immediate expectations, than tempted delay and put off this day. This is all that we find the postles doing, and indeed all they could do. They could only eak in general terms, of the nearness of this day; they could ot fix, or limit it to any particular time; and, if they were oved by the Spirit to speak of it, in such a manner, as might duce others to make such particular applications, as might be neficial to all in every age, I can see no fallacy in this; espe-ially considering, that, as death and judgment are the same ings, in reference to our eternity, the apostles might both isely and properly speak of the day of judgment in such lan-uage as might move every man daily to expect it.

Why men are left ignorant of this day.

This however must not be dissembled, that these, and the like assages in scripture, gave occasion [y] to succeeding christians to ink that the day of judgment was near at hand; and have since made

[u] Acts i. 3. * 2 Pet. iii. 8. [x] Lucas's Sermons, Vol. I. [y] Thus Lactantius Instit. Lib. VII. c. xxv.) asserted, that there was not above two hundred ears space between the time when he wrote, and the end of the world: and efore him Tertullian, and Origen concluded, from the words of St Paul, rethren, the time is short, it remains, that those that have wives, be as though ey had none, 1 Cor. vii. 29. that doomsday could not be far off. St Chrysostom, one of his sermons (de Virginitate) tells his hearers that this present time uns to an end, and the final resurrection is, as it were, at the door: and mong later writers, Martin Luther (in his Colloq. Mensal. c. xxxiv, xxxviii.) as these warm sayings; "I verily believe that the angels are already up in arms, that they are putting on their harness, and girting their swords about them: for the day of judgment draweth near, and two hundred years hence the voice will come, and sound, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh."

made ſome perſons, otherwiſe ſober and judicious, too bold a daring in this particular; their ardent deſires of Chriſt's comin and the great preſſures and afflictions which they laboured unde and wiſhed to be delivered from, puſhing them on to aſſign th preciſe and punctual time. The unſucceſsfulneſs of their co jectures however may be of uſe to convince us of this truth that he who hath appointed this day, hath alſo, for good an wiſe reaſons, determined to hide it from the knowledge of a men, that they may not be puffed up with pride and conceit fro their foreſight of futurities; that frail minds may not intermedd with divine ſecrets; that the deſigns and myſteries of providenc may not be interrupted, but ſhewn them all at once; that ſecu rity and preſumption, if the day were diſtant, horror and diſtra tion, if it were near, may not invade mens minds; and tha looking upon every day as what may bring their great judg from heaven, they may live in continual watchfulneſs and pre paration for his coming: and this the rather, becauſe (how li tle ſoever they know of the time when) they are certainly n ſtrangers to this, that the day of the Lord ſhall come as a thie in the night, when all thing are wrapped up in ſilence, in ſleep and ſecurity; and that the laſt age ſhall be as much ſurpriſed a the burning, as that of Noah was at the drowning of th world. They will be eating and drinking, buying and building projecting glorious deſigns, and engaged as eagerly in the buſi neſs and entertainments of life as ever; and when they cr Peace and Safety, promiſe themſelves vaſt returns from the undertakings, and think their proſperity impregnable; then ſha the fatal day ruſh in unawares, and overwhelm them with ſwi and irreſiſtible deſtruction. When the voluptuous are revelling in the exceſs of riot; when the ambitious are graſping at power making themſelves great by ſlaughter and deſolation, and raiſin their trophies upon the miſery of their neighbours; then ſha all their enjoyments, and all their hopes be unexpectedly raviſh ed from them, and their conqueſts ſwallowed up in the univer ſal ruin. [z] Wherefore, beloved, ſeeing that ye look for ſuch things, be diligent, that ye may be found in him in peace, with out ſpot, and blameleſs.

Whenever it comes, it comes ſuddenly,

and therefore it is wiſdom to provide for it.

I KNOW not what ſtrength may be thought in the apoſtle's reaſoning now, * but let the hardieſt ſinner ſuppoſe the day o judgment come, and fancy himſelf ſurrounded with the thouſand terrors of it: let him conceive nature diſſolving in agonies; th world flaming, the trumpet of the arch-angel ſounding: th glory of God diſplaying itſelf in the perſon of Chriſt and armie of angels; the roaring of the ſea, the convulſion of the earth the falling of rocks and mountains; dreadful flaſhes of lightning and vollies of thunder; the ſhrieks and howlings of devils, an diſtreſſed ſinners attacking him from every quarter, and a guilty conſcience

[z] 2 Pet. iii. 14. * Lucas's Sermons, Vol. I.

nſcience, at the ſame time, ſtabbing and terrifying him from ithin: let, I ſay, the hardieſt of ſinners make this ſuppoſition, d then he will not fail to be convinced of the reaſonableneſs d great importance of the apoſtle's admonition, † ſeeing then at all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved, what manner of perſons ght we to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs? That hen Chriſt ſhall be revealed from heaven to take vengeance on s enemies, as well as to glorify his ſaints, we may be found of m without ſpot or blemiſh, and, having our fruits unto holi-ſs, may, in the end, be made partakers of everlaſting life.

SECT. I.

Of HEAVEN.

The happineſs of heaven, why ſo inexplicable.

BELOVED, [a] now are we the ſons of God, and it does not yet appear what we ſhall be, ſays St John, deſcribing the ivileges of the goſpel-ſtate: and if ſo great an apoſtle as St hn, to whom ſo many revelations were vouchſafed; to whom a door in heaven was opened, and the [b] throne of God, and e [d] new Jeruſalem, and [e] the river of life, and [f] the tree of e, and [g] the light of the holy city were exhibited, was unable give us a deſcription of the heavenly ſtate, how ſhall any but oſe bright miniſters of God, who continually ſtand in his pre-ace, and are employed about the great arcana of his kingdom, ſufficient to diſplay the tranſcendent felicities that are there? Our perception of any object we know, depends ſo much upon juſt proportion and agreement with the faculty by which we uſt perceive it, that where the object is either very remote, or ry diſproportionate, the perception muſt needs be dark and nfuſed. Now this is the caſe of the happineſs we are going treat of. It ſtands at a mighty diſtance, and cannot be attain-in the life that we now lead: it requires many alterations to made in our perſons, in order to qualify us, both for the rception and enjoyment of it: it does not manifeſt itſelf to us any light of its own, nor is it to be diſcovered by ſuch collec-ns or inferences as reaſon and our natural powers are wont make, concerning matters near at hand, and commenſurate to em: it is the free gift of God; the product of his will and unty to his creatures; and therefore the ingredients where-it conſiſts, as well as the conditions whereupon it is beſtow-, can only be learnt by ſuch declarations as he has been pleaſ-to make for our ſupport and encouragement in this life. me preſages and expectances indeed of a future happineſs, er death, have been entertained by the beſt and wiſeſt men

† 2 Pet. iii. 11. a 1 John iii. 2. b Rev. iv. 1. c Ibid. ver. 2, 3. d Ibid. i. 2. e Ibid. xxii. 1. f Ibid. ver. 2. g Ibid. ver. 5. h Stanhope on the ſiſtles and Goſpels, Vol. II.

of all ages; but for a firm perſuaſion and certain account of this matter, we are beholden to Jeſus Chriſt, who therefore is truly ſaid to have brought life and immortality to light through the goſpel: and yet it may not be amiſs to obſerve, even as to the goſpel itſelf, that the declarations which are made therein are not, in all points, ſuited to the nature of the thing, but expreſſed in terms full of condeſcenſion. They are accommodated to the capacities of men, dwelling in bodies of fleſh, converſing with groſs and material objects, and moved by ſenſible impreſſions; and the language, wherein they are delivered, is ſuch as we underſtand, rather than what deſcribes them.

THIS is the ground of all thoſe metaphors and parables which figure out to us the joys of the bleſſed, by eating and drinking at Chriſt's table; by ſumptuous banquets; by marriage-feaſts; by fertile paſtures, beautiful dwellings, magnificent cities, whoſe ſun never ſets; and by thrones, and all the enſigns of honour peculiar to princes upon earth: and yet we are ſufficiently forewarned againſt taking theſe paſſages in their literal ſenſe, when we are told that the children of the reſurrection [i] neither hunger nor thirſt, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; and conſequently, that there will be an end of all ſuch gratifications of ſenſe, when both the neceſſities that require, and the appetites that purſue and recommend them to us, ſhall be no more. This however we are given to underſtand by ſuch metaphors and alluſions, that all the ſatisfaction which can poſſibly reſult from the greateſt plenty, the higheſt honour, the moſt exquiſite beauty, and every rational and truly manly pleaſure; as much and more than the moſt ſenſual can enjoy, or imagine, or wiſh for, will be, not only equalled, but vaſtly exceeded in the happineſs of the next world: for the very great variety of figures made choice of to this purpoſe, intimates, that there is no ſort of joy, whereof we are capable in that ſtate, but what will be conferred upon us in its utmoſt perfection. And, with theſe obſervations, we ſhall proceed now to take a view of the plan which the ſcriptures have given us of the celeſtial ſtate; and obſerve, as we go along, I. Wherein its chief glories and felicities will conſiſt: and, II. Upon what account there will be ſuch degrees and varieties of them.

The locality of heaven.

I. THAT there is a certain place appointed by God to be the receptacle of the bleſſed, in the upper regions of the world, and above the ſtarry orbs, and therefore called [k] the Third Heaven; that this place is remote from the fogs of this lower world, and out of the utmoſt projection of the dark ſhade, made by any bodies here below, and therefore called [l] the Regions of Light; that this is a very pleaſant and delightful place, and therefore in alluſion to the Garden of Eden, called [m] a Paradiſe; nay, a place

i Rev. vii. 16. Luke xx. 35. k 2 Cor. xii. 2. l Iſa. xxx. 26. m 2 Cor. xii. 4.

ace of unutterable, inconceivable pleaſure and delight, and erefore called the [n] Paradiſe of God; that this place God the ather honours with his more immediate preſence, and therefore ry often is called the Father of Heaven; that here God the n has his reſidence, and therefore is ſtiled [o] the Lord of Hea-n; that here God the Holy Ghoſt, the third Perſon in the er bleſſed Trinity, inhabits, and therefore is ſaid to be [p] ſent wn from Heaven; and that this place, finally, is the court of e Great King, where all his glorious miniſters ſtand ready to ey his commands, and therefore they are called [q] the Angels Heaven: theſe are truths, ſo plainly revealed in ſcripture, at whoever is ſatisfied of its divine authority, cannot call in eſtion the reality of this beatific place. Whatever therefore me enthuſiaſts may tell us of an heaven within, the only one, hich God has provided for departed ſouls, and that the notion a local heaven is too mercenary, and carnal, and what ſa-urs of Mahometiſm: the ſober chriſtian, who reads theſe ords of our Lord, [r] In my Father's houſe are many manſions; it were not ſo, I would have told you: I go to prepare a ace for you; and if I go, and prepare a place for you, I will me again, and receive you unto myſelf, that where I am, may be alſo; cannot but believe that thoſe, who at the final dgment ſhall receive the happy ſentence, ſhall be admitted into e ſame empyrean heaven where their Saviour Chriſt, God eſſed for evermore, ſitteth at the right hand of his Father.

AND indeed the doctrine of a determinate place, where good en ſhall be recompenſed after this life, and enjoy an uninter-pted ſtate of happineſs, is what not only Jews and chriſtians, t even infidels and Pagans have profeſſed. The elyſian lds, places which the imagination of [t] their poets have de-ribed with all the advantages that can give the moſt agree-le entertainment to the mind, and excite in the heart the moſt ger deſires, are marked out for the abode of the juſt. [s] Nay, e heathen theology went ſo far, as to transform thoſe great ſouls to divinities, who being raiſed above the common rank of good en by their extraordinary virtues, had acquired the glorious me of Heroes; and flattery, founded upon the opinion of a ory and happineſs more than human, in favour of theſe great en, has by little and little been ſo bold as to flatter, with an otheoſis, the ambition of kings and emperors. Had theſe en the flights and flatteries of their poets only, a good deal fiction might have been ſuſpected in them; but when it ap-ars, that the wiſeſt and graveſt of their philoſophers were of is opinion; when we find the divine Plato affirming that the od and virtuous ſhall, after this life, go [u] to the iſlands of the bleſſed,

n Rev. ii. 7. o 1 Cor. xv. 47. p 1 Pet. i. 12. q Matth. xxiv. 36. r John v. 2, 3. s Vid. Hom. Odyſ. Lib. IV. & Virg. Æn. Lib. VI. t Martin, of Na-ral Religion. u *Eis makaroon neſous oekein en paſe eudaimonia kakoon ektos*, Phædone.

bleſſed, enjoy all happineſs, and be free from all evil, which iſlands he places in the ætherial regions; when we find the great Cicero affirming, * that in the empyrean orb, the ſoul fixes herſelf in her aſcent after death, where ſhe wants nothing, but is ſuſtained with the food that the ſtars are nouriſhed with, and from thence ſurveys the whole world, and all that is contained in it, at one view; we cannot but conclude that a certain abode for the ſouls of the righteous after death, in full poſſeſſion of all joy and felicity, was the general perſuaſion of all who had any notion of their immortality.

Its outward beauty and magnificence.

THE x poets indeed have employed the utmoſt ſtreſs of their fancy, and called up all the agreeable ideas imaginable to complete the deſcription of thoſe abodes; but all they have ſaid is nothing comparable to what St John, in the Revelation, hath told us of the new Jeruſalem, y the building of whoſe walls was of jaſper, and the city was pure gold, like unto glaſs, and the foundation of the wall of the city was garniſhed with all manner of precious ſtones. The firſt foundation was jaſper, the ſecond ſapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth an emerald, the fifth ſardonyx, the ſixth ſardius, the ſeventh chryſolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth a topaz, the tenth a chryſophraſtus, the eleventh a jacinct, the twelfth an amethyſt, and the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every ſeveral gate was one pearl, and the ſtreet of the city were pure gold, as it were tranſparent glaſs; and the city had no need of the ſun, nor of the moon to ſhine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. Theſe expreſſions we grant are figurative, but ſtill they convey a notion of a place full of beauty and magnificence as we muſt needs imagine the ſupreme heaven to be, whenever in a clear winter's night, we caſt our eyes up to thoſe ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtars that deck and adorn the region which are but the out-works, and pavements, as it were, of the grand empyreum.

Its rational pleaſures and enjoyments.

BUT the happineſs of a man, conſidered as a rational creature, conſiſts not ſo much in the nature of the place, as in the free and vigorous exerciſe of his intellectual faculties, upon proper and deſerving objects: and therefore, z ſuppoſe we, that theſe bleſſed abodes are inhabited with intelligent beings, full of contemplation, and thirſty after the knowledge of the truth, what can be imagined more grateful to them than to be admitted to the very fountain of all truth and reality, there to quench their thirſt, and ſatisfy their deſires with the free and eaſy, but ſtill

* Tuſc. Quæſt. L. I.

x Devenere locos lætos, & amena vireta.
Fortunatorum nemorum, ſedeſque beatas.
Largior hic campos æther, & lumine, veſtit
Purpuero; ſolemque ſuum ſua ſidera norunt, &c.
VIRG. Æn. Lib. VI.

y Rev. xxi. 18, &c. z Scott's Chriſtian Life, P. I.

ll freſh diſcoveries of his infinite glories and perfections, in the onders of nature, of providence, of grace! But then, ſuppoſ- that their minds are ſo raiſed, and their apprehenſions ſo ick and ſagacious that they can all know whatever they have mind to know, without the difficulty of ſtudy, and diſcern the pendence and connection of things, without any laborious de- ction; with what unſpeakable ſatisfaction muſt they needs eruſe this infinite volume of divine being and perfections!

[a] It is a known rule, given by divines for the better under- nding of ſcripture, "That the words which ſignify ſenſe and knowledge, are very often to be underſtood ſo, as compre- hending in them thoſe effects and affections which ſenſe and knowledge are apt to produce in us;" and therefore, when e are told that upon our admiſſion into heaven, [b] we ſhall ſee od as he is, not [c] through a glaſs darkly, but face to face, and all then know him, even as alſo we are known; we are given underſtand, that we ſhall not only attain to a knowledge of e divine excellencies, the moſt perfect that we can poſſibly re- ive, but ſhall likewiſe experience a pleaſure in ſuch knowledge r above what we are now able to imagine. For [d], if in many ſtances, men of contemplation feel even now, from an imperfect iſcovery of ſome beloved truth, a ſatisfaction not to be equalled y all the pleaſures of the moſt indulgent epicure; what can e think muſt be the joy, the gaity, the triumphs of thoſe ſouls, ho ſee in God the truth and excellencies of all things, as in eir common ſource and centre; who in him are continually eing all that is lovely, and loving all they ſee, and poſſeſſing ll they love? [e] Suppoſe we then a ſociety of intelligent beings, laced in ſuch a ſtate, wherein they have an object of infinite erfections always before them, and no evil from within or ithout to check or divert them, exerting all their faculties up- n him, in the moſt rational actions: ſuppoſe them as full of ve and duty to him as ever their hearts can hold, copying his erfections, adoring his excellencies, and breathing forth them- lves in chearful praiſes and Hallelujahs; in a word, exerciſing hemſelves about him, to their utmoſt ſtrength and power, in all hoſe bleſſed offices which his nature, and their relation to him equire: ſuppoſe all this, I ſay, and we have before us the very op and quinteſſence of the heaven of a rational creature, who this bleſſed ſtate is, as it were, in his own proper element, nd moves and acts according to its moſt natural tendency.

But this is not all: the author to the Hebrews, as ſome- hing additional to the ſupreme felicity, which the viſion of God ets us into, gives us a catalogue of the bleſſed company which nhabit the city of God, the heavenly Jeruſalem; and tells us hat when we come to Mount Sion, we ſhall be adjoined to

[f] an

[a] Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. III. [b] 1 John iii. 2. [c] 1 Cor. xiii. 12. [d] Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels, Vol. III. [e] Scott's Chriſtian Life, P. I.

[f] an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant: and certainly every soul [g] that has any spark of cordial love for Jesus the best friend of souls that ever was, any grateful remembrance of what he did and suffered for our sakes, cannot but esteem it a mighty felicity to be admitted into his presence, and to behold the happy change of his past woeful condition; to see him that was once so cruelly treated upon earth, raised now to be head and prince of all the hierarchy of heaven. But oh! when that blessed person shall not only permit us to see his glory, but introduce us into it, and make us partakers of it; when we shall not only behold his beloved face, but be admitted into his dear conversation, and dwell in his arms and embraces for ever; when we shall hear him record the wondrous adventures of his love, through how many woeful stages he passed to rescue us from misery and make us happy; and, in the mean time, shall have a most ravishing feeling of that happiness, how will our hearts spring with joy, and burn with love, and our mouths overflow with praise and thanksgiving to him! But this is not all still: in the heavenly state, we shall not only live in a participation of our blessed Saviour's presence, but in the happy society of saints and angels, those pure and immaculate spirits, who, being endowed with large and comprehensive understandings, as well as perfect good-nature and most generous charity, cannot fail of making most excellent company. When therefore, this wicked and unsociable world being at an end, [h] and all things which offend, and them which do iniquity, cast into a furnace of fire, we, as soon as we arrive at the courts of the great King, shall, [i] with infinite congratulations for our safe escape, be conducted into the company of patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs, and introduced into an intimate acquaintance with them, and with all those brave and generous souls, who, by their great examples, have recommended themselves to the world; when we shall be familiar friends with angels, and arch-angels, and all the courtiers of heaven shall call us brethren, and bid us welcome to their master's joy; when we shall be received into this glorious society, I say, with all the endearments of such heavenly lovers, invited to enter into the choir, and have our harps strung by their celestial fingers, to join with them in ascribing [k] power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing unto him, that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb, for ever and ever: such a mighty accession will all this be to our happiness, that we may omit to mention the great alteration, which will then pass upon our bodies, when [l] there shall be no want or

f Heb. xii. 22, &c. g Scott's Christian Life, Part I. h Matth xiii. 41, 42.
i Scott, ibid. k Rev. v. 12, 13. l Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. III.

infirmities, no importunity of appetite, no unevenneſs of ſſion, no hunger or thirſt, no wearineſs or ſleep, no pain or rrow, no feebleneſs or decay, no ſickneſs or old age, no dying y more, but beauty for aſhes, and joy for mourning, [m] a joy hich no man taketh from us, and a beauty, which outwears me itſelf, and [n] ſwallows up mortality in life.

Holineſs neceſſary to the enjoyment of heaven.

THUS we have given a ſhort view, as far as we have light om ſcripture, of the glories and beatitudes of the world to me: and from the whole we may obſerve that holineſs is ceſſary to our future happineſs; or, in other terms, that it is poſſible to enjoy heaven without an heavenly diſpoſition. For ſuppoſing it ſhould pleaſe Almighty God to take us all immediately into the higheſt heavens, and there place us round our bleſſed Saviour; all ſuch as are real ſaints among s, as love God above all things, and have prepared their inds for ſpiritual enjoyments, how glad would they be to ſee heir Redeemer ſhining in all his glory? How ſudden ſhould ey ſtrike up with the choir of heaven in ſinging forth the raiſes of him that brought them thither? What infinite plea- ure would they take in the place, the employment, the com- any, and every thing they ſee there? But as for others, who re ſtill in their ſins, and mind only earthly things, how ſad and iſconſolate would they be? They would wonder to ſee the ints ſo pleaſant and joyful; for, as for their parts, they would e nothing there to take delight in; in the midſt of light, ey would be ſtill in darkneſs, and in ſorrow in the midſt of ys. They could not hear the heavenly muſic, or if they did, it ould ſound harſh, and be all diſcords to them: they could not aſte thoſe ſpiritual dainties, or if they did, they could not reliſh find any ſweetneſs in them: they could not ſee the face of od, or if they did, they would not be pleaſed, but terrified nd confounded at it; and all this for want of a principle of ue grace and holineſs, without which, a blind man may as ell delight in pictures, the deaf man in muſic, or a brute beaſt metaphyſics, as men of ſuch tempers either in heaven or in od himſelf. [p] The truth is, God in his wiſdom hath ſo ordered e matter, ſo admirably contrived our nature and our duty, at virtue and happineſs, grace and glory are one and the ſame ing, differing only in the circumſtances, and ſeveral proſpects e conſider and view them under. The good man begins his eaven upon earth, and finiſhes there what was imperfect here: r the more he maſters his ſenſual appetites and gets above the orld, the more he improves his mind in the ſtudy of religion, nd acquaints himſelf with God by frequent prayer and hea- enly meditation; the more he is ſpiritualized, and, as the poſtle expreſſes it, made meet to be partaker of the inheri-

tance

m John xvi. 22. n 2 Cor. v. 4. o Beveridge on the happineſs of the ſaints heaven. p Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels, Vol. III.

tance with the ſaints in light. [q] As ever therefore we deſire to go to heaven, when we die, we muſt take care, while we live, to get our hearts purged from all corrupt affections, our minds enlightened, and our ſouls ſanctified throughout, that ſo we may go out of this world rightly diſpoſed and fitted to behold the light of God's countenance, to ſolace ourſelves in it, as the higheſt object of our deſires, and to let in the beams of happineſs, which are eternally proceeding from it, according to our ſeveral capacities of receiving them: for ſo we are led to affirm,

Different degrees of glory and happineſs in heaven, proved from reaſon,

II. THAT there will be different degrees of glory and happineſs in the other world, according to our different improvements in this. And indeed, if a pure ſpiritual mind, free from all carnal luſts and paſſions, be abſolutely neceſſary to put us into a fit capacity of reliſhing thoſe refined joys that are above; it will from hence naturally follow, that the more ſpiritualized, raiſed and exalted our diſpoſitions are, the quicker, the ſtronger, the more pleaſing will be our taſte of thoſe heavenly pleaſures, and, conſequently, the greater, the more enlarged and comprehenſive will our happineſs be. God indeed is the common fountain of the celeſtial bliſs, and the emanations of happineſs from him are diffuſed every where, and perhaps fill all the ſaints alike; but then, though every capacity ſhall be full, yet their capacities being unequal, ſome may receive a greater meaſure and proportion than others; juſt as the light of the ſun is the ſame, and yet its rays are received in a greater or leſs quantity, according to the make and texture of the body it ſhines upon. [r] Chriſt, it is true, is the common Saviour of all, his blood is alike ſufficient, and was alike ſhed for the redemption of all; but it does not therefore follow that the rewards purchaſed by that blood will alike be beſtowed on all, any more than that the ſame degrees of holineſs and ſanctification will, through the efficacy of that blood, be alike communicated to all. The man, who by a ſincere, though late repentance, has pacified his offended God, for the many errors of a mis-ſpent life, ſhall never have his ſins riſe up againſt him in order to his condemnation; and yet it is incongruous to ſay that theſe ſins will not leſſen his reward, will not diminiſh his happineſs, will not detract from his glory; nor can it be conſiſtent with the righteouſneſs of the judge of all the earth, to place ſuch an one in the ſame ſtate of eminence with thoſe, who by an early piety, and uninterrupted courſe of righteouſneſs, have excelled in the work of the Lord; or of thoſe, who [s] in labours more abundant, in ſtripes above meaſure, in priſons more frequent, in deaths often, [t] have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and counted them but dung, that they might win Chriſt.

THE

p Beveridge on the happineſs of the ſaints in heaven. r Smalridge's Sermons. s 2 Cor. xi. 23. t Phil. iii. 8.

THE Lord in the vineyard indeed, as he is repreſented in the arable, paid all the labourers alike, [u] making thoſe who had rought there but one hour, equal unto them who had bore e heat and burden of the day: but, if we look into this arable, we ſhall ſoon find that the pay here given muſt neceſ-rily be underſtood of the gift of grace, and cannot poſſibly be xtended to the gift of glory; becauſe we find that it is given the envious and unthankful, even to thoſe, of whom it is xpreſsly ſaid that they are not choſen. * The ſcope of the arable, in ſhort, is deſigned to juſtify God's proceedings in the ſpenſation of his grace towards the church of the Jews, and at of the Gentiles; the latter of which was not called till a ng time after the former, and yet was made equal in the eſſings and benefits of the goſpel-covenant; which has no-ing at all to do with the matter now in queſtion. But, even dmitting the analogical ſenſe of the parable, all that we can in-r from it is this,—[x] That men of conſtant holineſs ſhall go to eaven, and ſo ſhall ſincere penitents; that the martyrs, and all at ſuffered much in the profeſſion of the faith, ſhall be crowned, nd ſo ſhall all chriſtians who lived well and died in peace: but hether all their crowns ſhall be equally bright; whether their egrees of glory and felicity ſhall be the ſame, this the parable, ven in its moſt extenſive application, acquaints us not with, nd many other paſſages in ſcripture there are, which acquaint s with the very contrary.

FOR when our Saviour informs us, that [y] in his Father's ouſe are many manſions, and ſome of the higheſt places in hoſe heavenly habitations, the prophet Daniel hath appro-riated to thoſe who convert ſinners from the error of their ays; for [z] they that be wiſe, ſaith he, ſhall ſhine as the bright-eſs of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteouſ-eſs, as the ſtars for ever and ever; when Chriſt addreſſes him-lf to his apoſtles in theſe remarkable words, [a] Ye are they at have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint nto you a kingdom, that ye may [b] eat and drink at my table, and from ſcripture.

u Matth. xx. 12. * Bull's Sermons, Vol. II. and Stanhope's Sermons on ſe-eral occaſions. x Stanhope, ibid. y John xiv. 2. The multitude of manſions heaven ſeems hardly intelligible, without admitting a difference of degrees in e heavenly glory. For, if all the ſaints ſhall be placed in one and the ſame de-ree or ſtation of bliſs, they would have all one and the ſame manſion in hea-en; but in our heavenly Father's houſe there are *monai pollai*, many man-ons, ſome higher, ſome lower, according to the meaſure of proficiency in irtue to which men have attained in this life. So Clemens Alexandrinus, here are with the Lord many rewards and manſions, according to the propor-ion of mens lives, Strom. iv. So Tertullian, how are there many manſions ith the Father, but according to the variety of mens good works? and ſo the athers of the church afterwards alledged this text againſt Jovinian, who held parity of rewards in the life to come. Biſhop Bull's Sermons, Vol. I. z Dan. ii. 3. a Luke xxii. 28, &c. b It may ſeem a little ſtrange that our Saviour hould here promiſe his apoſtles the privilege of eating and drinking at his table, hen it is certain, that in the kingdom of heaven their glorified natures would ſtand

in my kingdom, and [c] ſit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael; when the ſons of Zebedee requeſted of their maſter that [d] they might ſit, the one on his right hand and the other on his left, in his kingdom; and our Saviour, though he does not promiſe this degree of eminence to them, does yet plainly aſſert, that it ſhall be given to thoſe of his followers, for whom it is prepared of his Father; from theſe, and ſeveral other paſſages in ſcripture, we may certainly be allowed to infer thus much, that there are ſome particular marks and inſtances of glory wherewith the apoſtles, and thoſe that initiate them in the apoſtolic office, wherewith perſons of uncommon zeal and more eminent ſanctity, ſhall be honoured above other chriſtians. Though therefore all [e] the righteous ſhall ſhine in the kingdom of their Father; yet [f] as there is one glory of the ſun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the ſtars (for one ſtar differeth from another ſtar in glory) ſo alſo is the reſurrection of the dead: thoſe that are raiſed to everlaſting life ſhall indeed all be glorious, but ſtill the glory of ſome ſhall be greater than that of others; and upon this principle the apoſtle earneſtly preſſes the Corinthians to a liberal contribution to their diſtreſſed brethren; [g] he that ſoweth ſparingly ſhall reap alſo ſparingly, and he that ſoweth bountifully ſhall reap alſo bountifully, whereby, without all manner of doubt, he means that the greater charity we exerciſe in this world, the greater happineſs and felicity attends us in the next; and ſo, on the contrary, the thinner our ſeeds of charity are ſown here, the leſſer will our harveſt of glory be hereafter.

Upon what account this is ſo.

In the parable of the talents, wherein our Lord, under the ſimilitude of [h] a certain nobleman going into a far country, allots a different reward to every man, in proportion to the different improvement he made of the talent committed to his care, we have not only a diſtinction made between two ſervants, though both confeſſedly juſt and faithful to their Lord, but are directed likewiſe to that rule and meaſure, according to which their different rewards were proportioned. To the good ſervant, whoſe pound had gained him ten pounds, our Lord thus addreſſes

ſtand in need of no ſuch repaſts. But this we muſt know is ſpoken in alluſion to temporal princes, who make it a particular mark of diſtinction, and a note of the perſon's eminence, whoſoever they pleaſe to receive to their table. Whitby *in Locum.* c To ſit on thrones judging (or governing, or being over) the twelve tribes of Iſrael, is a metaphorical expreſſion, taken, as Grotius well obſerves upon the place, from the antient ſtate of the kingdom of Iſrael, in which *oi phylarkai*, the princes or heads of the tribes, came neareſt in dignity to the king's majeſty, and in the public aſſemblies, ſat next the royal throne in chairs of ſtate made of ivory. d Mark x. 37, 40. To ſit at the right hand of a king, according to the eaſtern cuſtom, is the very next place of dignity to the king himſelf. Hence Solomon, ſitting on his royal throne, commanded his mother to ſit on his right hand, 1 Kings ii. 19. conſequently the third place of dignity in the kingdom is deſcribed by ſitting on the king's left hand: For accordingly, as any man was greater in the kingdom, ſo in the public aſſemblies he ſat nearer to the king's perſon. Bull's Sermons, Vol. II. e Matth. xiii. 43. f 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. g 2 Cor. ix. 6. h Luke xix. 12.

addreſſes himſelf; Well done, thou good ſervant, becauſe thou haſt been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And when the ſecond came, ſaying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds, he ſaid likewiſe to him, be thou alſo over five cities. Both the ſervants, as we are told, were diligent, and both therefore were rewarded for their diligence: but the diligence of the one had far exceeded that of the other, and his reward therefore was proportionably greater. Great caution however is to be obſerved how we expreſs ourſelves upon this ſubject; for when we ſay, with the holy ſcriptures, [i] that every man ſhall receive his own reward, according to his own labour, we do not mean that there will be an exact proportion between a man's labour and his reward: for it is certain that the higheſt degree of grace can never equal the loweſt degree of glory, nor can the beſt of ſaints, by all that he can do, deſerve ſo much as to be a door-keeper in the houſe of his heavenly Father: but the proportion here is between the work and reward of one good man, compared with the work and reward of another, and in this compariſon the proportion is exact.

In what ſenſe men are rewarded according to their works.

"SUPPOSE, for inſtance, (as [k] a learned father of the church "makes the ſimilitude) three huſbandmen were employed in "cultivating and dreſſing the field of ſome great prince, one "for one day only, another for three days, and a third for ſix "days. Now, if the prince, out of his royal bounty, ſhall "give to the firſt a thouſand talents, to the ſecond three thou- "ſand talents, and to the third ſix thouſand; it is evident that "the reward is meaſured out to each of thoſe according to "the different meaſure of their labour; but yet it were ridi- "culous to conclude from hence, that the labour of him who "wrought ſix days deſerved ſix thouſand, yea, or ſo much as "ſix talents, yea, or ſo much as one talent, and ſo in the reſt. "And in like manner may we conceive of the divine remunera- "tion. For although we affirm that God meaſures out to "every man a different degree of glory, according to the dif- "ferent meaſure of his labour; yet it doth not follow from "hence, that between the work and the reward of one and "the ſame man, there is an equality of proportion, but only, "that between the different works and rewards of different "men, there is an equality of proportionality: ſo that if the "work of any man be compared with his reward, which is "eternal life, we may preſently diſcern an infinite inequality "between them; but if the works of different men, and the "rewards of different men be compared according to the de- "grees of eminence in the ſame eternal life, there will appear "an exact proportionality." And in this ſenſe ſhall every man be rewarded according to his labour.

[l] PROPERLY

[i] 1 Cor. iii. 8 [k] Davenant, de Juſt. Act.

[l] PROPERLY ſpeaking indeed, and in ſtrict juſtice, the moſt perfect man upon earth cannot be ſaid to merit the very loweſt degree of glory: the leaſt reward in heaven will be an happineſs that is eternal; and there is no proportion between an eternal reward and a ſhort momentary ſervice, though it be that of the beſt of ſaints. Our holineſs itſelf, as well as that eternal life, is the free gift of God, and the good actions we do, we thankfully aſcribe to his aſſiſting grace; but though we dare not preſume to appeal to his juſtice, we may with an humble confidence rely upon his mercy; though we cannot juſtly challenge any reward from God, yet God we know will not forget our work and labour of love; though our good works are not the cauſe, for the ſake of which, yet they are the conditions, upon the performance of which, we ſhall receive our recompence; though after all we can do we are ſtill but unprofitable ſervants, yet if we do all we can, we ſhall in no wiſe loſe our reward.

Each ſaint ſhall be ſatisfied with his own degree of happineſs.

THUS it appears that the ſaints in heaven, compared with each other, ſhall have different degrees in happineſs, proportioned to their different improvements here: but what is the particular happineſs of the ſtate, [m] this difference ſhall occaſion no uneaſineſs, but to every ſaint his own degree ſhall be a ſatisfactory beatitude. In this lower world indeed, the narrow-hearted are apt to repine at each others gain, and the ambitious to envy the promotion or ſplendor which ſome poſſeſs above others; but where there is no envy (and ſure we are that there can be none in thoſe peaceful regions which are above) the great happineſs of another can by no means diminiſh any one's joy, nor can it be feared that the exalted bliſs of others ſhould impair or diſturb the felicity of any the leaſt ſaint in that bleſſed place, where every one will reliſh his own happineſs the more, becauſe others abound in theirs. Though therefore there will be many veſſels (to make uſe of a common ſimilitude) of different ſizes and capacities, to receive thoſe rivers of pleaſure, which flow from the right hand of God; yet all of them ſhall be full. He that gathered much of the manna in the wilderneſs, had nothing over, and he that gathered little, had no lack; and ſo it ſhall be here: they that are ſeated in the higheſt manſions of glory, ſhall not look down with contempt on thoſe that are beneath them, nor ſhall theſe lift up an envious eye towards the other, but without any the leaſt pride, or grudging, or diſcontent, they ſhall love and take delight in one another, and by an inexpreſſible union of ſublimated charity, make each, what the other enjoys, his own: and ſo altogether, though in different notes, compoſe one ſweet harmonious concert in the praiſes of God, the fountain of their bliſs.

BUT

[l] Smalridge's Sermons. [m] Bull's Sermons, Vol. I.

Other curious queſtions relating to that ſtate.

But over and above the celebration of the praiſes of God, what the particular work and employment of the ſaints in heaven will be, and in what manner God will communicate himſelf to them; whether our glorified bodies will have the ſame ſenſes and affections, or altogether different; be able to take in objects at never ſo diſtant a view, or in ſome meaſure be limited in their operations as they are now; [o] whether our ſouls will be able to comprehend the eſſences and ideas of things, as they are contained in the divine underſtanding, and behold every thing there as in a glaſs; whether we ſhall perfectly ſee the intellectual ſyſtem of the world, I mean all the orders of angels together, and what kind of converſation we ſhall have with them, as well as how far we ſhall know and be known by one another; and whether in any particular manner we ſhall ſtand affected to thoſe that are our friends and relations, and acquaintance in this life: theſe, and perhaps a thouſand things more, which may concern the glories of that ſtate, are queſtions that we can come to no certain reſolution in. The revelation we have of theſe matters is delivered to us in general terms, and whoever pretends to deduce particulars from it, runs a manifeſt hazard of being deceived in his conjectures. Since however we are aſſured of this truth, [p] that every degree of grace, which we advance to here, will raiſe us to a degree higher in a future glory, and the greater and more induſtrious our labour in God's ſervice has been in this life, the greater and more copious and abundant ſhall our reward be in the life to come; the ſenſe of this, one would think, ſhould rouſe and awaken us out of the remiſſneſs and negligence in religion that too often ſeizeth us, and animate us to generous attempts even of heroic virtue, which, in this degenerate age, are derided as romantic enterpriſes. At leaſt it ſhould often call us from our idle ſolitude or unprofitable ſociety, to our prayers and devotions, and make us readily embrace, nay, ſtudiouſly ſeek after frequent opportunities of doing good, [q] that ſo an entrance may be adminiſtred to us abundantly into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

SECT. II.

Of HELL.

The nature of hell.

THAT there is a particular place, appointed by Almighty God, for the reception and puniſhment of the wicked, both men and angels, and therefore called [a] a place of torment; that this place is at a wide remove from the ſupreme heaven, the court of God, and habitation of the righteous, and there-

fore

n Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. III. o Burnet, de Statu Mort. & Reſur. p Bull's Sermons, Vol. I. q 2 Pet. i. 11. a Luke xvi. 28.

fore called [b] the abyſs and bottomleſs pit; that it is a place of exquiſite and moſt intolerable torments, and therefore called [c] Tophet in the Old Teſtament, and [d] Gehenna in the New; that thoſe torments are inflicted with actual fire, and other horrid ingredients, and therefore the place is called a [e] furnace of fire, and a [f] lake of fire and brimſtone, where there is [g] ſmoke and [h] darkneſs, [i] utter darkneſs, and [k] blackneſs of darkneſs, &c. and that this ſtate of puniſhment is to be eternal, without any mitigation or hopes of end, and therefore the fire wherein the wicked ſuffer, is called [l] everlaſting, [m] never to be quenched, but enduring [n] for ever and ever: theſe are truths as obvious as any that occur in the word of God, and may therefore juſtly occaſion our wonder, why either the reality of the place or the materiality of the fire therein ſhould be called in queſtion. To ſatisfy ſuch queſtions however, after we have, 1. Proved the reality of hell, and mentioned ſome conjectures, where poſſibly its place may be; we ſhall, 2. Attempt a ſhort deſcription of the miſeries therein compriſed; and then, 3. Conſider the degrees of its puniſhments, and the reaſons of their eternity.

The reality of its fire.

I. WHEN our bleſſed Saviour put forth a parable to the multitude, concerning [o] the good ſeed ſown by the owner of the ground, and the tares ſown by the enemy, and his diſciples requeſted him to explain it unto them; the explanation which he gives them is this—He that ſoweth the good ſeed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good ſeed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that ſowed them is the devil; the harveſt is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burnt in the fire; ſo ſhall it be at the end of the world: the Son of man ſhall ſend forth his angels, and they ſhall gather out of his kingdom, all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and ſhall caſt them into a furnace of fire, there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth. [p] No

b Rev. ix. 2. and xx. 3. c Iſa. xxx. 33. Tophet was a place in the Valley of Hinnom, near Jeruſalem, where the idolatrous Iſraelites made their children paſs through the fire to Moloch, 2 Kings xxiii. 10. Jer. vii. 31. It has its name (for Tophet is from Tophaſh, pulſavit, or from Taph, tympanum) from the drum and tabret which the idolaters played upon all the time the children were ſacrificed to Moloch, that the tender parents might not hear their cries; and from hence we may gather upon what account this place was afterwards made uſe of by the Jews, to ſet forth the torments of hell-fire, and the horrid cries and groans of thoſe that ſuffered there. d Matth. v. 22, 29, 30. Ch. 28, &c. *Geenna* is derived from Hinnom, *i. e.* the Valley of Hinnom, mentioned juſt now; which being abuſed to ſuch execrable purpoſes, was by king Joſiah turned into a dunghill, where dead carcaſſes were diſpoſed of, and malefactors buried or burnt, (2 Kings xxiii. 10. 2 Chron. xxviii. 3) for which purpoſe there being always a fire kept, it ſtill continued to be thought by the Jewiſh doctors a very fit emblem of hell. Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. e Matth. xiii. 42, 50. f Rev. xix. 20. g Ibid. xiv. 11. h Jude ver. i Matth. viii. 12. k Jude ver. 13. l Matth. xxv. 41. m Mark ix. 43. n Rev. xiv. 11. o Matth. xiii. 24, &c. p Swinden's Inquiry into the nature and place of Hell.

hen a parable is expounded, it is natural to ſuppoſe that it ould be done in plain and proper language, otherwiſe the exlication will breed a greater confuſion in the minds of the earers than the parable itſelf: conſequently the fire into which he workers of iniquity are caſt, muſt be a reality, and not a arabolical alluſion, becauſe by it the obſcurity of the parable is xplained. In like manner, when our bleſſed Lord, deſcribing he great and terrible day of judgment, tells us, that his final entence upon the wicked will be, [q] Depart from me, ye curſed, nto everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; we annot but ſuppoſe that, as theſe words are the ſentence of a wiſe and impartial judge, they ought to be delivered in as plain nd intelligible terms as poſſible. The intent of allegories and arables is to hide the meaning of the ſpeaker, and darken the nderſtanding of the hearer, [r] that ſeeing he might ſee, and not erceive, and hearing he might hear, and not underſtand: but he laſt judgment of Chriſt is for a quite different purpoſe, viz. hat the whole world may not only hear it with their ears, but nderſtand it too with their hearts, and ſee it executed with heir eyes. It is evident therefore, that the general and final entence, by which the wicked ſhall be judged to everlaſting ire, muſt have in it no figures or allegories, but plain and proer ſpeech only; becauſe the guilty muſt thereby perceive what heir doom is; the angels, who are the miniſters of that judgnent, muſt know what they are to execute; and the ſaints, who ſhall concur with Chriſt in judgment, diſcern what they re to aſſent to and approve.

VEXATION of mind and the burnings of an enraged conſcience, will certainly be no ſmall part of the puniſhment of the damned; ut if by unquenchable fire we are to underſtand nothing more han this, we ſhall be under ſome difficulty to make tolerable enſe of theſe words of our Lord, [s] It is better for thee to enter nto the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, o be caſt into hell-fire, where the worm dieth not, and the fire s not quenched. If the worm and the fire, I ſay, be all one, and nean no more than the remorſe and uneaſineſs of mind that attends n guilt, beſides the indecency of the tautology, how forced and nnatural muſt it be to ſay, that it is better to enter into the kingom of God with one eye, than having two, to go into the eteral puniſhment of the wicked, into vexation of mind, that ſhall ever ceaſe, where their vexation of mind never ceaſeth? This uſt be the conſtruction of the words, if we take fire in a figuative ſenſe: and therefore to abſolve our Lord from the impuation of any ſuch abſurdity, the *Geenna tou pyros* muſt denote he place of torment, and the fire itſelf be taken in a literal, not figurative ſenſe: for ſo the venerable Bede, upon the text, cquaints us, that by the worm, Chriſt noteth the too late reentance of ſin, which will never ceaſe to bite the conſcience of the

q Matth. xxv. 41. r Mark iv. 12. s Ibid. ix. 47, 48.

the damned in their torments, as by fire, the burning of hell; that the fire might be a torment outwardly raging, and the worm a grief inwardly accuſing.

How immaterial beings may be tormented with fire.

How outward fire may burn and continue for ever, without impair and diminution, and affect immaterial beings with pain and anguiſh, are queſtions eaſily reſolved, if we do but once conſider the hand that hath prepared it, which can give it a quality quite different from culinary fire, viz. not to conſume, but repair what it preyeth upon, ſince [t] the breath of the Lord, like a ſtream of brimſtone doth kindle it continually. And though it be difficult to conceive how material fire can act upon ſpiritual ſubſtance; yet, if we conſider what pain is, we ſhall ſoon find that pure ſpirits are as capable of it as ſpirits in conjunction with bodies. [u] The human ſoul, in its own nature, is as much a ſpirit as angels, yet it has a painful ſenſation of fire, or any other afflicting evil that ſtrikes upon the ſenſes. It muſt be owned, however, that it is not the body only that feels pain; it paſſes through the body to the ſoul; and many times, when the ſoul is employed in a ſtrong diverſion of thought, the body becomes inſenſible of it. Now, if God, by a natural conſtitution, has ordered that the body, touched and moved after ſuch and ſuch a manner, ſhould excite a painful ſenſe in the ſoul; what ſhould hinder, but that he may have likewiſe ordained, that devils ſhould feel the impreſſion of material fire, in the place which he hath appointed for their confinement?

That there is a hell at preſent.

WHETHER from the beginning of things, and at the firſt revolt of the apoſtate angels, God appointed a certain place for their confinement, as well as for the puniſhment of thoſe wicked ſouls which ſucceſſively depart this life; or whether they are both permitted to roam, but under ſome proper reſtriction and limitation, and, till the day of judgment, are ſubjected to no other pains, but what are mental, *i. e.* ſuch as ariſe from grief and deſpair, and dire expectations, has been a matter of ſome debate among the curious. The devils, indeed, who had entered into the two Gargaſens, cried out to our Saviour, as he was going to diſpoſſeſs them, * What have we to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time? Which words ſeem to imply, that the time appointed for their puniſhment was not yet come. But when it is conſidered that theſe very devils beſought our Saviour [x] that he would not command them to go out into the deep, *eis ten abyſſon*, whereby all interpreters underſtand hell; when it is conſidered that they are ſaid to be [y] reſerved in everlaſting chains of darkneſs, unto the judgment of the great day; and the fire, which the wicked are to ſuffer, is ſaid to be originally prepared for them; we cannot but conclude, that, even at this time, there is a local hell, the place of their confinement, though

t Iſa. xxx. 33. u Bates of Hell. * Matth. viii. 29. x Luke viii. 31. y Jud. ver. 6.

not of their ultimate punishment; where they suffer much, but not all that they are to suffer; for that is not to be inflicted until the coming of the universal Judge; when, together with him, as the prophetic book expresses it, [z] Fire shall come down from God out of heaven, and devour the wicked, and the devil that deceived them shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. But in what part of the world this lake and burning abyss is situate, the conjectures of the learned have been various.

The place of hell, whether in the centre of the earth,

1. THAT there are many great cavities in the earth, stored with fire, and all kinds of combustible matter, is manifest from those terrible eruptions which burning mountains are known to make, and those rivers of liquid fire which break out of their bowels, or are spued out of their mouths. From this phœnomenon most of the antients were of opinion, that at the centre of the earth there was a certain inexhaustible treasure of fire, which fed all these Vulcanos, and was itself the place of hell: and for their confirmation in this, they had not only the consent of most philosophers, both Greek and Latin, but, in some measure, the testimony of scripture, which represents hell as a [b] lake of fire, and a [c] low place beneath the earth. But, on the contrary, others have imagined that the centre of the earth is filled with water, rather than fire, because the Psalmist declares, [d] that God founded the earth upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. 2. It is certainly true, that fire cannot subsist without air to sustain it, as well as fuel to feed it; and therefore allowing that there is a sufficient quantity of combustible matter in the heart of the earth, yet how the air should penetrate so far, and so easily, considering the vast thickness of the solid part of the earth, as to be able to support the violence and rapidity of these everlasting flames, is inconceivable: nor can we imagine that the

[z] Rev. xx. 9, 10. [a] It is very wonderful what Alphonsus Borellus, a learned mathematician at Pisa, who, after the great eruption in the year 1669, went into Sicily, while the fact was fresh, to view and survey what Ætna had done, tells us of that matter, viz. That the quantity of matter thrown out of the mountain at that time amounted to ninety-three millions, eight hundred thirty-eight thousand, seven hundred and fifty cubical paces, which, had it been extended in length upon the surface of the earth, at the breadth and depth of three foot, would reach farther than ninety-three millions of paces, which is more than four times the circuit of the whole earth, taking a thousand paces to a mile. All this matter, it is true, was not actually inflamed or liquid fire, but sixty million paces of it, as the same author computes, were so, and came out of the mouth of the pit in that form. This made a river of fire, sometimes two miles broad, according to his computation, but according to the observation of others, who also viewed it, the torrent of fire was six or seven miles broad, and sometimes ten or fifteen fathoms deep, and forced its way into the sea near a mile, preserving itself alive in the midst of the waters. Burnet's Theory, Vol. II. and State of the Dead, Vol. II. Ray on the Dissolution of the World, and Swinden's Inquiry into the Nature and Place of Hell.

[b] Rev. xix. 20.—xx. 10, 14, 15.—xxi. 8. [c] Psal. lxxxvi. 13. Deut. xxxii. 22. [d] Psal. xxiv. 2. [e] Swinden, ibid.

centre of the earth can be ſpacious enough to contain thoſe myriads of fallen angels, and innumerable company of the ſons and daughters of men, who ſhall be deſtined to the infernal priſon.

or in the ſun.

Upon theſe preſumptions ſome have forſaken the common opinion, and from the nature of the body of the ſun, its magnitude, and poſition, have deviſed a new hypotheſis, which makes it to be the ſeat of hell. [f] That the body of the ſun is fire, appears from the intenſe heat which it darteth; that it is of ſufficient bigneſs to contain all apoſtate angels, as well as all the ſons and daughters of perdition, the computation of the moſt ſkilful aſtronomers of this age, who make it more than eleven hundred thouſand times bigger than the earth, may convince us; and that, according to the Copernican ſyſtem, which ſuppoſes the ſun, and not the earth, to be placed in the centre of the world, the empyrean heaven is at the fartheſt diſtance, and moſt direct oppoſition to the ſun (which makes this opinion ſomewhat more tolerable) cannot be denied: but then conſidering that ſo bright and radiant a body cannot well be thought the proper manſion of darkneſs and utter darkneſs, as hell is deſcribed to be; and among the many uſes for which God ordained this bright luminary, no mention is made of its being deſigned for the puniſhment of the wicked: nay, conſidering withal, that the devil and his angels are ſo far from being confined to this, or any other determinate place, that he is repreſented as the prince of the power of the air, *i. e.* the chief or general of the whole army of evil ſpirits that frequently range up and down in the air; and not in the air only, but on the earth likewiſe, where, like roaring lions, they walk up and down, ſeeking whom they may devour; there ſeems to be more probability in their opinion, who ſuppoſe that [g] though the region of fire in the bowels of the earth be the place of hell ſignally ſo called; yet, largely ſpeaking, hell is not one ſingle place; ſince not only dark and thick air, but even the ſea and waters may ſometimes be the habitation of the devils and damned ſpirits. They are not ſo confined and ſhut up, but that they have liberty to leave their capital priſon ſometimes; nor ſhall they be abſolutely fixed to one place till after the day of judgment: but, as ſoon as that is paſſed, they ſhall then for ever be confined, not to a narrower compaſs than before (for hell ſhall rather be enlarged) but to a perpetual enduring of the flames, which they were not obliged to before: for then ſhall the whole earth and air be turned into one vaſt fire, and while the ſaints are making their way to heaven with all ſpeed, the wicked will be left below to be tormented for ever in this ſpacious hell; to which purpoſe a learned author [h] of our own has thus expreſſed it: "At the conflagration of the earth, the great

or rather on the earth, at its conflagration.

"channe

[f] Swinden's Inquiry into the Nature and Place of Hell. [g] Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. [h] More's Grand Myſtery of Godlineſs, Book VI.

" channel of the ſea ſhall be left dry, and all the rivers ſhall " be turned into ſmoke and vapour, ſo that the whole earth " ſhall be inveloped in one intire cloud of unſpeakable thick- " neſs, which ſhall cauſe more than Egyptian darkneſs, clammy, " and palpable to be felt; and this, being added to the choaking " heat and ſtench which is there, will complete this external " hell: a place of torment appointed not only for the profane " atheiſt and hypocrite, but alſo for the devil and his angels, " where their pain will be proportionated according to the " untamedneſs of their ſpirits, and the unevenneſs of their per- " verſe conſciences."

A deſcription of hell, and its ſad eſtate.

II. SUPPOSE we then, a place wherein dwells nothing but ſorrow and deſpair, pain and horror, and whatever is capable of making it intolerable to be endured, and yet impoſſible to be evaded; a ſcene that repreſents no other proſpect but the wrath and indignation of an angry God: where thick darkneſs, and the moſt intenſe heat reign, but no mixture of light allowed to the condemned priſoners, but what may help them to ſee the many hideous and doleful ſpectacles that do ſurround them: where wicked men and devils are blended together in one promiſcuous crowd, the wicked intirely given up to the malice and inſults of mercileſs fiends, and from the preſent ſtate of inſupportable torments, whetting their fury againſt their fellow-ſufferers, in order to maintain a continual intercourſe of mutual miſchiefs and vexations: where nothing, in ſhort, is heard, but weeping and wailing, loud ſhrieks, and diſmal groans, ſore lamentations, and dire upbraidings, occaſioned by the ſeverity of the torments they feel, and their former folly and madneſs in drawing one another into that deteſted place: ſuppoſe this, I ſay, and we have, in ſome meaſure, a feint image and repreſentation of the diſmal abode and converſation wherein the wicked is to live for ever.

BUT beſides this phyſical, there is a moral hell, which the wicked bears about in his breaſt, I mean, the laſhes of his guilty mind, and thoſe vexatious paſſions and reflections which will follow him into the other world, and there be let looſe upon him with inexpreſſible vehemence. [i] For, when the wicked ſhall be no longer cloathed with ſuch bodies of fleſh, as now mightily obſtruct and preſs down the ſoul in her operations, but ſhall put on ſpiritual bodies, bodies, in which their ſouls ſhall freely and uncontroulably exert their utmoſt powers; their apprehenſions and reſentments of things muſt neceſſarily become vaſtly more quick and vigorous, and, conſequently, the ſenſe of their own folly, guilt, and miſery, and their remorſe and anguiſh thereupon, exceedingly more keen and poignant than ever they felt them before. Nor can we forbear thinking, but that the divine vengeance will both add new ſtings to the inbred ones, and, in ſome

[i] Archbiſhop Dawes's Sermons.

ſome ſupernatural manner, ſo whet and ſharpen the points of the old ones, that whereas in this ſtate, their conſciences did only chaſtiſe them with whips, in that which is to come, they will chaſtiſe with ſcorpions.

SUPPOSE we then, an innumerable company of ſelf-condemned wretches, confined in this direful place of torments, with a ready remembrance of all the abominable deeds of their former lives, with a clear perception of God, the fountain of bliſs, and of thoſe eternal joys in heaven which they have loſt, with a quick ſenſe of the torments they ſuffer, and a ſure proſpect of their eternal duration, and uninterrupted continuance; and then conſider what ſhame, and ſorrow, and ſad remorſe, what rage, and fury, and wild deſpair muſt alternately take poſſeſſion of their minds, and make them break out into loud laments, and ſuch fruitleſs wiſhes as theſe: [k] "O that I had not given way to the ſpirit of "luſt and uncleanneſs, of luxury and wantonneſs, which betrayed me into innumerable miſcarriages in my life! O that "I had not followed the dictates of malice and revenge! O "that I had never defiled my lips with profane ſwearing and "blaſphemy! O that I had never been unmerciful and uncharitable, that I had never injured or oppreſſed the poor, but "had relieved their neceſſities, and made them partakers of "my abundance! Had I done this, and inſtead of purſuing criminal pleaſures, made the ſalvation of my ſoul my care and "ſtudy, I might now, inſtead of frying in theſe flames, been in "yonder bright and glorious manſions, ſinging praiſes and Halelujahs among the bleſſed ſaints, and with them, communicating in the preſence and enjoyment of God, and his Chriſt. "But from thence I am eternally baniſhed: the gulph, the "mighty gulph, the decree, the irreverſible decree of an angry "God has made a ſeparation, which can never be ſurmounted: "and here muſt be thy ſad abode: theſe fiends muſt be thy "companions and tormentors: this fire, the element wherein "thou muſt live, and this worm muſt gnaw greedily upon thee "for ever. O dreadful word, *forever!* When ten thouſand "times ten thouſand ages are paſt and gone, thy miſery will be "the ſame, and not a moment nearer its expiration. All the "ſufferings thou canſt endure, in an infinite ſucceſſion of ages, "will not appeaſe the enraged Deity, or incline him to relent. "To recover his favour is a thing impoſſible, and therefore, "[l] farewel hope, and with hope farewel fear; farewel remorſe; all good to me is loſt: Evil, be thou my good." And thus the wretched creature goes on, loading himſelf with curſes and execrations, envying and raging at the bleſſed above, reproaching and ſnarling at his fellow-ſufferers in hell; and, as he reflects on his loſt condition, and the unrelenting wrath of heaven, raging and blaſpheming even God himſelf. O ſad eſtate,

k Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. l Milton's Paradiſe Loſt.

eſtate, which turns every thing into poiſon, and will make the wretched curſe the very fountain of happineſs, thereby precluding all hopes of reconciliation, and perpetuating their puniſhment for ever?

III. THESE are ſome of the ſad ingredients which will conſtitute the hell and forlorn condition of the reprobates hereafter; and from hence it will follow, that though their puniſhment will be ſevere, yet will it not be in all alike, but differ, in proportion to the degree and aggravations of their iniquities. Different degrees of puniſhment in hell, and upon what accounts.

* One great part of the puniſhment of hell conſiſts, as we ſaid, in the remorſe of conſcience, ariſing from the ſenſe of guilt; and therefore, where the greateſt guilt is, there muſt be the greateſt remorſe, *i. e.* the greateſt puniſhment from the ſenſe of it. Whilſt men are in this world indeed, they have a great many ways to divert theſe bitter reproaches, there is ſtill room for hope; and they may ſtill deceive themſelves with the fruitleſs expectations of a future repentance and reformation; but when they are once paſſed into another world, theſe torments are unallayed, and unintermitted: their thoughts are always awake, and upon the ſtretch, and perpetually employed in the mortifying conſideration of their own ſin and madneſs. Now, if the torments of the reprobate do, in a great meaſure, conſiſt in a bitter reflection upon their own paſt folly and ingratitude, the more fooliſh and ungrateful they have been, the more heavily will this reflection ſit upon them, the more ſenſibly will it touch them, the more grievouſly will it torment them. When they conſider (and they will always be conſidering) thoſe many opportunities they had of knowing their duty, and thoſe mighty aſſiſtances that were afforded them, to enable them to perform it (a mercy not equally vouchſafed to all men) the ſenſe of their miſery muſt needs be increaſed, in proportion to the divine favours and advantages which they have ſo wilfully neglected and deſpiſed.

ALL ſinners will, no doubt, be extremely and inſupportably miſerable, upon the view of their being for ever excluded from the preſence of God, and from the fruition of thoſe pleaſures that are at his right hand for evermore: but we have no reaſon to think that the ſenſe of this loſs will afflict each particular unhappy ſoul equally; we have rather ſufficient grounds to believe that thoſe, who have been aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers to the covenant of grace, will be leſs tormented by this conſideration, than thoſe who had the benefit either of the law or goſpel, to guide and direct them in the knowledge of God, and in their way to heaven. For how deplorable above meaſure muſt their condition be, how particularly ſevere muſt be their torments, who are conſtantly employed in conſideringwhat a fair capacity they were once in, what particular

* Smalridge's Sermons.

particular opportunities they once had of enjoying that God, and thoſe pleaſures, which they muſt now loſe for ever? The more frequent calls and invitations a man has had to repentance here in this world, the more wilfully and preſumptuouſly he hath neglected the means of grace, and the more he hath reſiſted the good motions of the holy Spirit of God, the greater will his remorſe be, and the more terrible his puniſhment; the more will he be torn by the worm, which never dies, and the more furiouſly will the fire, which ſhall never be quenched, prey upon him.

To be ſhort, all anxious and tormenting paſſions ſhall be let looſe upon every impenitent and condemned ſinner, and at once diſtract and torment every loſt ſoul: but then conſidering that theſe paſſions are as much capable of degrees in the other world as they are in this, the more ſcandalouſly a man has miſ-placed, or miſ-employed them, the more ſinfully he has indulged them, the more irregularly he has abuſed them in this world, the more ſeverely will they uſe him, the more grievouſly will they afflict him, the more intolerably will they torment him hereafter in the next. So that in the very nature of the thing, there muſt be an inequality of future torments, in proportion to mens guilt, even though the divine juſtice did not interpoſe. But when the ſacred records acquaint us that [m] the ſervant, which knew his maſter's will, and did not according to it, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes, and that [n] the Scribes and Phariſees, who devoured widows houſes, and, for a pretence, made long prayers, ſhould receive the greater condemnation: when they tell us, concerning the wicked inhabitants of Capernaum, that [o] it ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for that city; and concerning the gueſt (who, notwithſtanding the favour vouchſafed him of being admitted to the marriage-feaſt, [p] came without a wedding-garment) that he was caſt into utter darkneſs, *i. e.* not only ſhut out of the bride-chamber, as other unworthy gueſts were, but removed to the fartheſt diſtance from heavenly light and happineſs; we cannot but conclude, that God, who can perfectly diſtinguiſh between different degrees of wickedneſs, and is abundantly able to puniſh every ſinner according to his deſert, whatever inequalities may be here, is determined, in the future ſtate, to proportion the torment to the guilt, and to inflict ſuch diſtinct puniſhments as are peculiarly due to each particular offender.

Their eternity proved from ſcripture.

BUT though there ſhall be different degrees of torment in the other world, yet this can be no conſolation to a thinking man, when he knows that the puniſhment which is denounced, and will certainly be executed upon every impenitent ſinner (whether he be under the dominion of the greateſt, or the ſmalleſt ſin)

m Luke xii. 47. n Matth. xxiii. 14. o Ibid. xi. 24. p Ibid. xxii. 12, 13.

ſin) will undoubtedly be eternal. Origen indeed, as [q] it is reported of him, was of a different opinion: he ſuppoſed that the torments of all the damned, even of the devils themſelves, after a determinate number of years, ſhould have an end. After him, others maintained that all mankind, under the condemnation, ſhould in time get rid of their torments, and leave the devil and his angels only heirs of eternal vengeance; others again, that, if not all mankind, at leaſt all chriſtians, ſhould, after a certain period, be releaſed from the pains of hell; and laſtly, others, that, if not all chriſtians, to be ſure all ſuch of them as were given to works of charity, however great ſinners in other reſpects, ſhould at length find a redemption. [r] But theſe opinions, as they ſeverally aroſe, were ever held heretical, and repugnant to the plain word of God. And indeed, when we read of [s] everlaſting burnings, of [t] everlaſting ſhame and contempt, of [u] everlaſting fire, of * everlaſting puniſhment, of [x] everlaſting deſtruction, of [y] eternal judgment, of [z] eternal damnation, of [a] the fire that is never quenched, of [b] blackneſs of darkneſs for ever, and of [c] the ſmoke of the torment of the wicked, which aſcendeth up for ever and ever, we can hardly ſuppoſe that ſuch a variety in expreſſions, and the ſtrongeſt of their kind that the ſcripture-language affords, were ever ſet to denote a temporary duration only. The [d] words indeed, which we render eternal and everlaſting, for ever, and for ever and ever, are ſometimes in ſcripture uſed in a limited ſenſe to ſignify a long continuance only; but then they are frequently (as where eternity is attributed to God, and he is ſaid to live for ever and ever, and where eternal happineſs is promiſed to good men, that they may be ever with the Lord) uſed in a larger ſenſe, and ſo denote an endleſs and indeterminable duration: and therefore, ſince the very ſame words and expreſſions are applied to the puniſhment of the wicked in another life, what ſhould hinder why we may not underſtand them in the ſame extent? Nay ſince, in one and the ſame ſentence, the duration of the puniſhment of the wicked is expreſſed by the very ſame term that is uſed for the duration of the happineſs of the righteous (for theſe, ſays our Lord, ſpeaking of the wicked, ſhall go away, *eis kolaſin aioonion*, into eternal puniſhment, but the righteous, *eis zooen aioonion*, into eternal life) [e] as there is no ground to ſuppoſe that the ſame word, in the ſame verſe, when applied to oppoſites, ſhould be taken in a different ſenſe, ſo there is great reaſon to believe, [f] that our bleſſed Lord, in the application, purpoſely intended to prevent our making any difference in the happineſs of the righteous, or miſery of the wicked, as to their eternity; but that,

q Aug. de Civit. Dei, Lib. XXI. r Archbiſhop Dawes's Sermons. s Iſa. xxxiii. 8. t Dan. xii. 2. u Matth. xviii. 8. * Ibid. xxv. 46. x 2 Theſſ i. 9. y Heb. vi. 2. z Mark iii. 29. a Ibid ix. 43. b Jude ver. 13. c Rev. xiv. 11. d Archbiſhop Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. I. e Ray on the Diſſolution. f Archbiſhop Dawes's Sermons.

that, while we thought ourſelves concerned to believe the one, we might, at the ſame time, be conſtrained to acknowledge the other.

An objection. "[g] BUT how much ſoever God has declared in ſcripture, "that impenitent ſinners ſhall be everlaſtingly puniſhed, yet "theſe declarations are certainly to be ſo mollified and under- "ſtood, as that we may be able to reconcile them with the eſſen- "tial perfections of the divine nature. Now it can in no ſenſe "be ſaid to agree with the juſtice of God, to puniſh temporary "crimes with eternal puniſhments, becauſe, if juſtice always "obſerves a proportion between offences and puniſhments, be- "tween temporary ſins, and eternal puniſhments, there is no "manner of proportion. And if it be ſo hard to reconcile this "with the juſtice of God, it will be much more ſo, to explain "how it can poſſibly conſiſt with that infinite mercy and good- "neſs which we ſo much aſcribe to him." This is the great objection againſt the eternity of hell-torments: and to give it a full ſolution, we ſhall produce moſt of the anſwers that have been alledged, in order to prove a conſiſtency herein with the divine juſtice and goodneſs. And the

Anſwered. FIRST of theſe is taken from the nature of ſin; which, being an offence againſt an eternal God, ought, according to the ſtrict rules of juſtice (which require that the puniſhment of offenders bear proportion to the dignity of the perſon offended) to have eternal torments for its puniſhment.

1. From the nature of ſin. [h] To live for a long while in an habitual neglect and contempt of the ſovereign Lord, Creator, and Governor of the world; to ſpend a whole life, or great part of it, in defying infinite power, in diſparaging infinite wiſdom, in deſpiſing infinite goodneſs, in hating infinite perfection; to have no gratitude for the greateſt of benefactors, no duty for the moſt rightful of governors, no honour for the moſt glorious of potentates, no awe for the moſt tremendous of majeſties; in one word, to be continually affronting and provoking every perſon of the bleſſed Trinity; to deſpiſe the riches of God's goodneſs, in ſending his Son into the world to ſeek and ſave us; to trample upon the Son, and to count the blood of the covenant, whereby we are ſanctified, an unholy thing; to do deſpite unto the Spirit of grace, and turn the deaf ear to all his kind calls and admonitions; to ſay all at once, to refuſe eternal happineſs, to fly from every thing that is good, and purſue every thing that is evil; what is all this put together, but ſuch a prodigious maſs of ſin and folly, ſuch an intolerable complication of every thing that is offenſive and provoking to Almighty God, as no puniſhment can be too great, no torments of too long continuance, to avenge? Even in this life we ſee, that, for the ſupport of human governments, the ſupreme power has a right, not

[g] Archbiſhop Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. I. [h] Archbiſhop Dawes's Sermons.

not only in the caſe of habitual offences, but even of ſingle acts of an heinous nature, to inflict perpetual baniſhment or impriſonment, nay, even perpetual poſitive torments, ſuch as labouring in the mines, at the gallies, or the like: and if it be thought juſt and lawful among men, for very great and outrageous crimes, to inflict ſuch puniſhments upon offenders as ſhall affect the whole duration of their lives (which is all of their beings that we have any power over) it cannot ſure be thought unjuſt in God to inflict ſuch puniſhments upon ſinners as ſhall affect the whole duration of their beings, becauſe there is manifeſtly in this caſe as much difference in the crimes, as in the duration of the puniſhments. * For, even in human ſocieties, an offence againſt a magiſtrate is of an higher nature, and attended with more ſevere puniſhment, than crimes committed againſt private perſons; and ſo, as the magiſtrate is more eminent and honourable, the injuries and indignities offered to him are ſtill eſteemed more heinous, and have greater puniſhments annexed to them, in proportion to the eminency and honour of the perſon offended: and therefore, ſince our ſins are rebellion againſt God, who is infinite in glory, and power, and all perfections, the guilt of them ſeems to be infinite; and, upon this account, ſince we are incapable of undergoing puniſhment infinite in degree, the infinite duration of it is no more than proportionate to our guilt. And as from the nature of ſin; ſo,

2. From the nature and diſpoſition of ſinners.

2. FROM the temper and diſpoſition of ſinners, the juſtice and equity of God's puniſhing them eternally may not improperly be inferred. Sinners indeed are but allowed a temporal life in the ſtate of trial and probation, and, conſequently, have it not in their power to ſin actually to all eternity; but, ſince they have contracted and ſettled themſelves into ſuch wicked habits, as, without the aſſiſtance of God's grace (which at laſt may be juſtly denied, where it has been ſo oft ſlighted and deſpiſed) do naturally infer a neceſſity of ſinning for ever; it is highly probable, that were they allowed to live eternally, they would eternally go on in their ſins: whereupon it becomes the great juſtice of our Judge, ſays Gregory [i], that they who in this life would never be without ſin, ſhould in the next never be without puniſhment.

[k] THE heathens indeed ſuppoſed that the fire of hell had a certain cleanſing quality in it, which, in ſome conſiderable tract of time would purify moſt ſinners (for ſuch as were very flagitious, they thought incapable of purification) from the guilt and pollution of their offences; but this was a groſs and carnal conceit. How fit ſoever that element may be to purge material things, it can have no ſuch quality for ſouls, immaterial ſubſtances, whoſe droſs and filth (as I may ſo call it) lies all in the will

* Lupton's Sermons. i Moral. Lib. XXXIV. c. xii. k Archbiſhop Dawes's Sermons.

and affections, and can be reached and ſeparated from thence, by no other fire but that of the Holy Ghoſt. The only way we know of to remove the guilt of paſt tranſgreſſions, is either to repent of them, or to offer a ſufficient atonement to the Divine Juſtice for them: but neither of theſe the wicked are capable of doing. Among themſelves they cannot find out a ſatisfaction, foraſmuch as they are all condemned perſons, and their utmoſt ſuffering is no more than the juſt deſert of their ſins: and the general ſatisfaction which was made for them and for all mankind, this they have ſo often and ſo ſcornfully rejected, [l] that there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſin, when judgment has ſeized them, and a fiery indignation is conſuming them. Their torments indeed may make them repent of their ſins, I mean, ſo far repent of them, as to wiſh they had not brought themſelves into that ſad place by reaſon of them. For who can feel pain, and not wiſh to be out of it? but what is this towards a thorough reformation of heart and life; of hating vice, and loving virtue, for their own ſake, and upon account of the acceptableneſs of the one, and the odiouſneſs of the other in the ſight of God, wherein the nature of true repentance does conſiſt? Or what expectation can there be, that when men are given up to the tormentor, and kept in chains of darkneſs, they will have the leaſt thoughts of growing better, under the inſtigations and tyranny of this great enemy of God and goodneſs?

3. From God's proceedings with us.

3. THAT it is conſiſtent with infinite Juſtice to ſet before men life and death, rewards and puniſhments, and deal with them according to their own choice, is too ſelf-evident to need any proof. [m] If the rewards indeed on the one hand, were not proportionate to the puniſhment on the other, there might be ſome plea againſt providence for making us ſuffer eternal torments for a ſhort life of ſin, when there was not an eternal happineſs propoſed to as ſhort a life of virtue; but, ſince the rewards and puniſhments are equal, it is not neceſſary that there ſhould be an exact proportion between the offence and puniſhment, conſidered in itſelf, and without reſpect had to the reward, becauſe the eternity of the reward anſwers to the eternity of the oppoſite puniſhment. If therefore God, in propoſing theſe rewards and puniſhments, does but deal with us candidly and ſincerely, we have nothing to blame but ourſelves, if we miſs of the one, and incur the other. Now the method of God's proceeding with us in this reſpect, is exactly this,—He propoſes everlaſting rewards, and everlaſting puniſhments to our choice; he exhorts us, with the greateſt earneſtneſs, and moves and aſſiſts us with the continual influences of his grace, to avoid the puniſhments; and he as earneſtly invites, and as ſufficiently enables us, to obtain the rewards. Himſelf moſt ſolemnly declares, that he hath no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that

l Heb. x. 26, 27. m Jenkins's Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity.

hat the wicked ſhould turn from his way and live; for that he merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodeſs and truth, keeping mercy for thouſands, and forgiving niquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin; but then it is added, that he will y no means clear the guilty, *i. e.* the wilful and pertinacious inner. Thus he exhorts, he invites, he promiſes, he threatens, e promiſes eternal happineſs, he threatens eternal miſery, to ive all the diſcouragement to vice, and all the inducement to irtue, that is poſſible; and yet, after all, he takes men at no dvantage, but makes all reaſonable allowances, in conſideration f the frailty of human nature, and in condeſcenſion to their nfirmities: he exacts no obſolute perfection, or impoſſible obeience, but only a faithful and ſincere diligence, or, when we ail therein, repentance and reſolutions of more care and circumſpection for the future. But if men either diſbelieve or diſregard theſe things; if they neither care for God's promiſes, or fear his threatenings; if they refuſe his calls, and make corn of his invitations, ſo that all the methods of his mercy and goodneſs are loſt upon them; there remains no other remedy, ut that juſtice ſhould have its courſe: if, when men are told ſo ong beforehand, what danger they are running upon, they will continue obſtinate in their diſobedience, after ſo many encouragements to repentance, and ſo long a courſe of importunity nd forbearance, they have no reaſon to complain of the ſeveity of that ſentence, which ſo often they have been threatened with, and ſo often have deſpiſed. The ſhort is this,—Since he rewards and puniſhments are both eternal, the terms on oth ſides are equal; and ſince it is in our power, by the help of ivine grace, to avoid the puniſhments, and obtain the rewards, he condition is ſuch, that any wiſe man would be thankful for t; far from complaining that the terrors of puniſhments are oined to the encouragement of rewards; that all motives concur to make him happy, and that God, in his great mercy, hath ſed all means, both inward by his grace, and outward by his hreats and promiſes, to bring him to ſalvation. For,

4. And the neceſſary ſanctions of his laws.

FOURTHLY, and laſtly, conſidering the perverſeneſs of our allen nature, and the bewitching qualities of ſin, God was obliged o annex an eternal puniſhment to the violation of his laws, beauſe a leſſer would not have been a ſufficient motive to ſecure our obedience to them. [q] That a leſſer puniſhment would have been ineffectual, is clear in experience, ſince we ſee that the penalty of eternal ſuffering, even as it is now threatened, fails of its purpoſe, in the greateſt part of ſinners: and if terrors of this kind will not frighten men from their wicked courſes, how an it be expected, that any denunciations of a leſſer weight would work in them a ſaving impreſſion? [r] The only true meaſure

q Ray of the Diſſolution. r Archbiſhop Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. I. and Jenkins's Reaſonableneſs, Vol. II.

ſure and proportion then between the crime and the puniſhment, is the ſuitableneſs of the puniſhment to enforce the obedience of the law. For if the law be good and neceſſary, and cannot ſo well and ſo effectually be obeyed without a very ſevere puniſhment to enforce it, the ſeverity of the puniſhment is ſo far from being a cruelty, that it is a juſt and wiſe proviſion to ſecure obedience to the law, and to procure the benefit deſigned by its inſtitution. Even human legiſlators, we ſee, are not ſo ſolicitous in the ſanction of their laws, to make the penalty commenſurate to the offence, as to make it ſufficient to enforce obedience to the law; and therefore God, perfectly underſtanding the temper and inclination, the ſtubbornneſs and perverſeneſs of mens hearts, ſo prone to vice, and ſo averſe to all that is good, foreſaw that the threatening of a leſs penalty than eternal ſufferings would not prevail with men to foreſake their ſins, in order to attain everlaſting life.

An objection.

"BUT though God hath thought fit, in order to deter men "from their ſins, to threaten at this high rate, * yet the power "of execution is ſtill in his own hands. He is not obliged to "execute what he hath threatened, any farther than the rea"ſons and the ends of government do require. Nay, he may, "without doing any wrong or injuſtice, remit and abate as "much as he pleaſeth of the puniſhment, that he hath threaten"ed: and this, without any impeachment of his truth and faith"fulneſs, any more than it is eſteemed among men, a piece of "falſehood, not to do what they have threatened." To this we may reply in the words of a bad man indeed, but what have a very great truth in them, † God is not a man that he ſhould lie, neither the ſon of man that he ſhould repent. Hath he ſaid, and ſhall he not do it? Or hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not make it good? Some threatenings indeed God is not obliged to make good, becauſe the ſcripture itſelf aſſures us, that his threatenings of temporal judgments are very often conditional, and conſequently, if the condition upon which they are ſuſpended intervenes, he ought not to proceed to execution. But then, on the other hand, there are ſome threatenings, ſuch eſpecially as he hath confirmed with an oath, that are confeſſedly abſolute and immutable: and accordingly it is generally inferred, that the wicked ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, becauſe God has ſworn, that ‡ they ſhall not enter into his reſt; for what he hath

Anſwered by ſhewing that God is obliged to make good his threats 1. From his oath.

* Archbiſhop Tillotſon, ibid. It is the misfortune of the great man, whoſe words we have here quoted, that he hath fallen into the very ſame ſentiment as to this particular with Mr Hobbes, who (in Append. ad Leviat) has this paſſage. We cannot prove from the juſtice of God, which hath threatened eternal torments upon ſinners, that their torments will really be eternal: for though he is unjuſt, who doth not perform the good which he owes to any one, nevertheleſs he, who doth not execute the evil or harm which he hath threatened, is not unjuſt, but merciful; how much leſs ſhall God who is infinitely merciful, be accounted unjuſt for mitigating either the largeneſs or intenſeneſs of our deſerved puniſhments? † Numb. xxiii. 19. ‡ Heb. iii. 18.

hath ſworn, is irrevocable, in as much as [u] he abideth faithful, and cannot deny himſelf.

But allowing theſe words to relate only to that earthly and temporal reſt which God had provided for his people in the land of Canaan; * yet in other reſpects he hath done ſo much towards the confirmation of his threatenings, as is certainly equivalent to the moſt ſolemn oath. He hath ſent his only begotten Son into the world, to be the revealer of this his wrath againſt all ungodlineſs, and unrighteouſneſs of men: Him, whom he hath ordained to be our judge, he appointed to deſcribe the whole proceſs of that great and terrible day, and to give us an account beforehand of the very ſentence that ſhall then be pronounced upon the wicked, and the immediate execution of it: and could any oath whatever give us a more ſolemn ratification of his threatenings, than all this has done? Can we think that God ſent his Son only to ſpeak big, but vain words? that our Judge himſelf frightened us with a ſentence that ſhall never be executed? nay, and foretold the certain execution of it, which yet ſhall never come to paſs? Our Saviour, in ſhort, who is the mediator of the covenant between God and man, has ſealed the truth of his threatenings, as well as of his promiſes, with his blood; and who then ſhall dare to ſay that they are not abſolute, or that he is concerned to perform the one, though not under the like obligation to inflict the other?

[x] The threats of men indeed may frequently be remitted, becauſe they are many times made in paſſion, and may exceed the rules of juſtice; or becauſe ſometimes the perſon threatened repents, and begs pardon, and returns to his duty: but as the damned cannot be ſuppoſed to do this, ſo neither can any culpable exceſs be incident to an all-perfect Being. [y] Whoever therefore will give himſelf time to conſider who God is, and how unchangeable his nature is, cannot but perceive, that, however he may ſometimes defer the execution of temporal evils, all his known attributes are concerned to inflict eternal puniſhment upon impenitent ſinners. He is an holy God, and therefore [z] hateth all the workers of iniquity; he is a juſt God, [a] who will by no means clear the guilty, nor let the ſinner go unpuniſhed; he is an Almighty God, able to execute the vengeance threatened againſt ſinners; for [b] who can ſtand in his ſight, when once he is angry? And what gives a ſad accent to all this, he that is thus holy, and juſt, and powerful, continues ever the ſame; will never alter or put off theſe properties; will never ceaſe to hate iniquity, and to be an implacable enemy to all that perſiſt in their ſins.

2. From his nature.

† Human juſtice indeed frequently does, and many times ought, to remit ſomething of thoſe penalties, which it has affixed to its laws,

u 2 Tim. ii. 13. * Archbiſhop Dawes's Sermons. x Whitby's Appendix to 2 Theſ. i. y Archbiſhop Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. I. z Pſal. v. 5. a Exod. xxxiv. 7. b Pſal. lxxvi. 7. † Rogers's Sermons, Vol. III.

laws, becauſe no human wiſdom can foreſee all thoſe circumſtances which may extenuate the guilt of an action, and in ſome meaſure excuſe the perſon, in hopes that he may bethink himſelf and reform; but the Divine Juſtice which is ſubject to no ſuch imperfection cannot be thus obliged to alter his determinations, or reverſe the ſentence which he has pronounced. Infinite Wiſdom has already weighed and conſidered every poſſible circumſtance of the actions of men: He hath known from all eternity both his own and others works, and therefore nothing new can poſſibly intervene which might make it juſt or neceſſary for him to change his reſolution, or alter the thing that is gone out of his lips. Mercy indeed is one of his darling attributes, yet we are to conſider it as conducted by his wiſdom, and conſiſtent with his holineſs, juſtice and truth, and theſe will always plead more ſtrongly for the puniſhment of ſinners, than the other can for their releaſement. To ſpeak properly indeed, [c] mercy and pity is not a paſſion in God as it is in men, but a perfection founded on the higheſt reaſon and equity: and therefore, though the miſery of ſinners be never ſo intenſe, and the number of the miſerable never ſo great, yet, when the equity and reaſonableneſs of the caſe does not require it, there is nothing to move God for their relief, becauſe he acts by the ſtanding rules of reaſon and wiſdom, not by any fondneſs or weakneſs of paſſion.

THE number of criminals indeed is apt to move compaſſion among men: but this proceeds partly from the ſympathy and frailty of our nature, and partly from the conſtitution of human affairs. To deſtroy multitudes, to depopulate cities and whole countries, would be bringing an affliction upon many innocent perſons who were the friends and relations of them that are deſtroyed. But the matter is not ſo in the preſent caſe. There will be no want of numbers in heaven: the righteous will be everlaſtingly happy, and perceive no diminution of their happineſs from the damnation of ſuch, as were never ſo dear to them in this world. Nay, what is more, their damnation will contribute not a little to the greater ſtability of the righteous, as well as augmentation of God's glory.

3. From the benefits which will accrue upon the puniſhment of the damned.

ALL angels, at their firſt creation, ſeem to be in the ſituation with thoſe that are now ſurrounding the throne of God. [d] They had no tempter to ſeduce them, nor wanted they any reaſonable motives to ſecure their ſtanding; and yet great numbers of them made a ſhift to rebel, and to forfeit their celeſtial places. An addition therefore of ſome new motive to make them more ſecure in the everlaſting poſſeſſion of their happineſs, ſeems not unrequiſite for them, and though the dreadful fate of thoſe of their own kind might be ſufficient for this purpoſe, yet when, over and above this, they ſhall perceive the wicked of the race of mankind, whom God loved ſo tenderly, as to ſend his Son into the

c Jenkins's Reaſonableneſs of the Chriſtian Religion, Vol. II. d Archbiſhop Dawes's Sermons.

the world to ſeek and to ſave them, ſentenced to everlaſting damnation likewiſe; who can doubt, but that this will ſtill make the motive to beware of falling, more cogent to them, and every moment yield them a fuller conviction, that there can be no poſſible hope of rebelling againſt God, and eſcaping his righteous judgment.

THE ſaints in heaven without all queſtion ſhall be for ever confirmed in their glory and beatitude; but then they ſhall no otherwiſe be confirmed, than by the moſt powerful motives that can poſſibly influence rational and free agents (for ſuch we ſhall for ever be) to avoid every thing that may endanger their falling. And to this purpoſe, what can be more prevalent than the eternal ſight and contemplation of thoſe torments which ſinners of all kinds, both men and angels, are everlaſtingly doomed to? what can give them a more ſenſible feeling of the happineſs they enjoy, than the proſpect of thoſe ſad miſeries which they by the divine aſſiſtance have been enabled to eſcape, like ſhip-wrecked perſons gotten ſafe to ſhore, the more admiring and rejoicing in their ſecurity, the more they look back upon the ſtorm they have left behind? what, I ſay, can be a more prevalent motive than this, to quicken and enlarge their praiſes and thankſgivings to God; to perpetuate their reverence and adoration of his holineſs; to excite and promote in them an utter horror and deteſtation of ſin for ever and ever; and finally, to make them rejoice and triumph, not in the ſufferings of their fellow-creatures, conſidered in themſelves, but as they are manifeſtations of God's juſtice, and power, and victory over his enemies, and a vindication of his honour and authority, of his truths and righteouſneſs, in his hatred and deteſtation of ſin, and in his wrath and indignation againſt ſinners?

THESE are the ends that may well become the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, in inflicting eternal puniſhments upon the reprobate: and therefore, to ſum up the whole of what has been ſaid on this argument:—[e] Since we have the Holy Spirit frequently expreſſing the eternity of hell-torments in words as plain and proper as can poſſibly be choſen for that purpoſe; ſince we have almoſt the whole chriſtian church, in all ages, interpreting theſe words and expreſſions, of a true and proper eternity; nay, ſince we have the holy ſcripture itſelf, determining its own ſenſe in this point, by ſuch circumſtances as can be conſiſtent with no other than what we are now pleading for: ſince, together with ſcripture, we have reaſon on our ſide, which, both from the nature and aggravations of ſin, and the temper and diſpoſition of ſinners; both from the attributes of God, and the manner of his proceedings with mankind, proves our aſſertion to be true; which gives us ſuch good arguments why it may be; diſcovers ſuch noble uſes why it ſhould be; and is

The ſum of the whole argument.

e Archbiſhop Dawes's Sermons.

is ſo utterly at a loſs (conſidering the order in which God has put things) to deviſe any reaſon why it ſhould not be; ſince this is the ſtate of the evidence before us, I ſay, it muſt needs be granted, that we have more than probable grounds to conclude that it will be: and therefore [f] let not the preſumption of a temporary hell encourage any man to go on in his ſin. If the event ſhould fruſtrate his hopes, and (as moſt likely it will) fall out contrary to his expectations, what a lamentable condition will he then be in? how will he be ſtricken, as it were, with a thunder-bolt, when the Almighty Judge ſhall fulminate againſt him a dreadful, indeed, but formerly by him undreaded ſentence, adjudging him to endleſs miſery? and how will he curſe his own credulity, who, by the groundleſs belief of a temporary puniſhment, has thrown himſelf upon an eternal one, which otherwiſe he might poſſibly have avoided?

And a final exhortation.

BUT ſuppoſe the beſt ſhould happen that the ſinner can either hope or conceive; that hell, according to his interpretation, ſhould laſt only, *eis aioonas aioonoon*, for ages of ages; yet did he ever experience what an acute pain means, and can he think this a ſmall matter? Were he, at this juncture, under the ſenſe and ſuffering of a raging fit of the ſtone, or gout, or cholic, and after ten thouſand years torture, to be admitted to all the happineſs his heart could wiſh, I make no doubt but that he would willingly relinquiſh all his expectations of the one, nay, and with it his being to boot, rather than be bound to endure the other for ſo long a term. But what are theſe pains to the torments and agonies of hell, or the duration of ten thouſand years, to that of ages of ages? If the ſinner makes light of all this, and nothing can reſtrain him but an eternity of puniſhment, he is bound to thank God for having uſed this only effectual means in threatening it; and it badly becomes him to complain of his rigour and ſeverity, who would have made ſo pernicious an uſe of his lenity and goodneſs.

THE truth is, though to come down to the ſinner's own terms, and thereby convince him of the folly of his choice, we may make ſuppoſitions, that the torments of the wicked may be determinable; yet, ſince we have no ſuch warrant from ſcripture, great caution ſhould be uſed how we even do this, [g] becauſe the belief of the threatenings of God, in their utmoſt extent, is of ſo great moment to a good life, and ſo great a diſcouragement to a bad one, that if men were once ſet free from the fear and belief of this, the moſt powerful reſtraint from ſin would be taken away. [h] Let none therefore deceive us with any of thoſe weak pretences, which ſeem to widen the gate of life, and ſoften the term of ſalvation. Be not deceived, God is not mocked: whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap;

f Ray of the Diſſolution. g Archbiſhop Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. I. h Rogers's Sermons, Vol. III.

reap; and therefore, if we ourſelves are, at any time, inclined to think more favourably of our condition than a juſt reflection on our lives will encourage; if we are tempted to hope from the divine mercy, while our works are evil, nay, while we continued in any unrepented ſin, let us reject the ſuggeſtion as the artifice of an enemy that would ruin our ſouls, and cheat us of our ſalvation. And, in order to break off our deteſted league with ſin, let us often and ſeriouſly think on theſe momentous things, and conſider well with ourſelves, what apprehenſions will then probably fill and poſſeſs our minds, when we ſhall ſtand trembling before our judge, in a fearful expectation of that terrible ſentence, which is juſt ready to be pronounced, and as ſoon as ever it is pronounced, to be executed upon us; when we ſhall have a full and clear ſight of the unſpeakable happineſs, and of the horrible and aſtoniſhing miſeries of another world: when heaven, in ſhort, with all its glories, ſhall be open to our view, and, as the expreſſion is in Job, [i] Hell ſhall be naked before us, and deſtruction have no covering; and, in a full ſenſe of this, let us work out our ſalvation with fear and trembling, that, [k] when the Lord Jeſus be revealed from heaven, in a flaming fire, our portion may not be among thoſe who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction, from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

i Job xxvi. 6. k 2 Theſſ. i. 7,—9.

A COMPLETE BODY OF SPECULATIVE AND PRACTICAL DIVINITY.

PART V.

Of the great Precepts of Moral and Evangelical Righteouſneſs.

CHAP. I.

Our Duty towards GOD.

The introduction.

IN treating of the Ten Commandments (when we brought the children of Iſrael to Mount Sinai, where they were at firſt delivered) we explained the ſeveral duties relating to God, and our neighbour, ſo far as the purport of ſuch negative precepts would permit us; and, in conſidering the various attributes of God, we took notice of the ſeveral duties and affections that do properly reſult from thence, ſo far as was conſiſtent with the nature of our ſubject, and the brevity uſually preſcribed to inferences: ſo that, in a great meaſure, we have prevented ourſelves in this part of our labour, and have the leſs reaſon to be prolix in what we call Practical Divinity, becauſe books of this kind are in every one's hands; and, in our own language, many of them written with ſo much learning and judgment, as far ſurpaſs whatever other nations have yet produced.

IT is not ſo much therefore to add to this ſtore, as to collect it into ſome tolerable compaſs, and ſet it before our reader in one view; to enlarge upon what we have curſorily mentioned, and explain what as yet has not come in our way; and more eſpecially, to conſider and enforce thoſe great diſtinguiſhing precepts which are purely evangelical, that we undertake this ſurvey of the whole duty of man, as it compriſes what we are bound to do with regard TO GOD, OUR NEIGHBOUR, and OURSELVES. But before we enter upon this, becauſe there are ſome people, who, for the quiet of their own minds, would

cancel

cancel all obligations to duty, by [a] running down the differences of good and evil, as though they were nothing but the arbitrary fancies of men, according to the different influences of cuſtom and education; as though doing well were nothing but a moral faſhion of appearing ſuitable to the country wherein we live, which varies as much as the different habits and languages of men do; becauſe there is a ſet of men in the world, I ſay, who ſolemnly advance ſuch poſitions as theſe, it may not be amiſs to premiſe ſomething concerning the moral and immutable diſtinction of good and evil, of virtue and vice, thereby to evince, that our obligation to the practice of the one, and avoidance of the other, is antecedent to any poſitive command, either of God or man.

The moral diſtinction of good and evil.

THAT reaſon, [b] whether we conſider it as a rule to direct, or as a law to oblige the choice of intelligent beings, ought to be the meaſure of every man's actions, is readily granted; but then the queſtion is, wherein reaſon conſiſts, and whether, in particular caſes, all actions, ſetting aſide poſitive inſtitution, be not equally reaſonable; whether, under certain circumſtances, for inſtance, it be not equally agreeable to reaſon, and conſequently, equally fitting and lawful for a man to commit any act of violence and cruelty, or even to blaſpheme, as it is to do juſtice, or love mercy, or walk humbly with God. Now to ſet this matter in a true light, we will ſuppoſe mankind in a pure ſtate of nature, a ſtate where all perſons are abſolutely independent; where neither the authority of parents, nor any ſuperior force of body, or capacity of mind can be pretended, to give one man the leaſt power or advantage over another; in a word, where there is no law, and conſequently, in a political ſenſe, there can be no tranſgreſſion, but every man is equally permitted to do what is right in his own eyes. Let us ſuppoſe farther, that in this ſtate of equality, it is perfectly indifferent as to a man's intereſt and convenience, whether he lie or ſpeak truth; whether he be kind and obliging, or churliſh and oppreſſive to his neighbour; whether, without any provocation, he murder an innocent man, or relieve him when in danger of periſhing: yet I would aſk, whether there is not ſomething (in itſelf, and without regard to any human compacts) more agreeable in a man's acting upon a principle of generoſity and good nature, than in exerting an arbitrary act of violence and cruelty? It is a ſingular inſtance of the goodneſs, as well as wiſdom of God then, that he hath implanted in us a natural tenderneſs towards one another under circumſtances of diſtreſs, whereby we find ourſelves invincibly moved, if not to relieve, at leaſt to compaſſionate thoſe that are unfortunate; and this duty we properly enough ſtile Humanity, as if it were ſo eſſential to human nature, that men could not diveſt themſelves of it, without degenerating into brutes and ſavages.

[c] SOME

[a] Stillingfleet's Sermons. [b] Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. II.

The practice of some particular people no just exception.

• SOME people indeed have so far divested themselves of it, as to entertain different persuasions of things. Among the Cilicians, robbery was thought an indifferent matter, as among the Lacedemonians, theft: incestuous marriages among the Persians were held innocent, and some other acts of uncleanness among the Thebans: but these instances do not overthrow the moral distinction of good and evil, because we do not deny that men may degenerate in their opinions, as well as their practices. There may be monsters in morality, as well as in nature; but, as these are to be no rule for the whole species, so neither can we suppose that their opinions would have been so much taken notice of, had they not herein contradicted the sense of the rest of mankind. For, ever since there have been men in the world, an infinite difference has been placed between virtue and vice. The name of virtue has been appropriated to certain approved actions that have been praised and recommended by all the world; and under the name of vice, has been comprised every thing that has been counted worthy of blame, and whereon dishonour and disgrace has been cast. [c] This distinction is so antient, so uniform, so universal, that it cannot proceed from bare education, but must have been the gift of nature; because nature, which is the same in all, gives to all the same institution, and the same light, and men have nothing to do but to follow it. Her voice is never fallacious; and therefore, the distinction which she, in general, has set between good and evil, is not arbitrary, but founded in the things themselves; and so far from depending on any positive laws, whether human or divine, that positive laws themselves do principally, if not solely oblige, by virtue of our pre-supposing this distinction.

The distinction manifest in relation to the duties we owe to God.

GOD we conceive is a Being infinitely good, wise and powerful; but it is absurd to suppose that he should have infinite power, and we not be bound to fear him; that he should have infinite goodness, and we not be bound to love him; that he should have infinite wisdom, and we not be bound to believe him, to trust in him, to depend upon him, and to submit to his holy will and pleasure. It is impossible to conceive a Creator giving life, and all the comforts of it, to a creature, and he is not obliged to be thankful to him, and to serve him; and if it be absurd not to serve God, it must in consequence be a good thing to perform, and an evil thing to neglect our duty to him. The distinction therefore between good and evil, between virtue and vice, so far at least as God is concerned in them, is inherent in the things themselves, and independent on any positive law or injunction to make them so: and with these observations we proceed now to the consideration of some of the principal duties we owe to our great Creator, beginning with those that are internal.

SECT.

c Stillingfleet's Sermons. d Martin of Natural Religion.

SECT. I.

Of the internal Duties we owe to GOD, and

I. OF LOVE.

HEAR, O Iſrael, ſays Moſes their ruler [f], commenting upon the precepts which God had given them, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy might: this, as our Saviour tells us [g], is the firſt and great commandment. And in treating of it, we ſhall ſhew, I. Wherein our love of God conſiſts, and upon what reaſons and conſiderations it becomes our duty: and then, II. What its properties and qualifications are, and by what means we may be enabled to attain it.

I. Now to love God is, [h] to poſſeſs our minds with ſuch a due ſenſe and eſtimation of the excellencies and perfections which are in the divine Nature, as may make us look upon God as our chief good; make choice of him as the only proper object of our happineſs; and prefer his cauſe and intereſt before any thing elſe that may come in competition with it: for the language of a true friend and lover of God is that of the royal Pſalmiſt, [i] Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee. And indeed, whether we conſider God abſolutely, as he is in himſelf, or relatively, as he ſhews himſelf to us, there is all the reaſon imaginable, why he ſhould be ſeated in the throne of our affections. To love God, what.

1. ABSOLUTELY, and in himſelf, God is propoſed to us as the moſt lovely and amiable of all beings, in whom there is an harmonious concurrence of all beauties and perfections, and who has all the excellencies that can poſſibly attract our love in infinite degrees, concentred in his nature. Wiſdom, both the ornament and perfection of a creature, is but a ſpark of light fallen from the Father of lights, and is to be found originally in him who [k] is the only wiſe God. Power, the thing which is univerſally courted among men, is fundamentally in him [l] who hath made the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, and who preſerveth them ſtill. Juſtice, which [m] makes the righteous man more excellent than his neighbours, is a glorious attribute of his Godhead, who is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. Holineſs, a thing ſo venerable among men, the moſt orient pearl that they can ſhew, is but a faint ray of that infinite purity which is in God. Kindneſs and beneficence, which no man ever hated, which wins upon all, is eſſential to him who is the fountain of all good, and whoſe mercy endureth for ever. And, to name Reaſons for loving him, from his attributes.

f Deut. vi. 4, 5. g Matth. xxii. 38. h Wilkins of Natural Religion.
i Pſal. lxxiii. 25. k 1 Tim. i. 17. l Neh. ix. 6. m Prov. xii. 26.

name no more, beauty, that common allurement of love, is so conspicuous in him, that the most glorious inhabitants of heaven, who see his face are dazzled with the glory of it: for the seraphims in Isaiah's vision appear [n] covering their faces in the presence of God, either as blushing at their own comparative deformity, or as unable to sustain the refulgent lustre of the divine perfections. If then we deservedly love and esteem those persons who are possessed of these graces, though in an imperfect degree; how can we but love and reverence God who is the glorious centre in whom all these excellencies meet; in whom perfect wisdom, and unerring justice, melting goodness, and alluring mercy, are all united to captivate our affections? especially considering,

His relation to us.

2. THAT besides these essential qualities in God, we have abundant reason to love him in his relative capacity, for the daily emanations of his goodness to us. [o] At first he produced us out of nothing, and made us thereby capable of receiving all kindnesses from him. Our existence could be no addition to his happiness, and therefore our creation was the more effect of his eternal love. The same philanthropy still sustains and preserves us, and keeps us from relapsing into the abyss of non-entity. The divine providence continually watches over us, skreens us from dangers, and confers on us actual favours and mercies: and therefore, if we think ourselves bound to love our friends and benefactors, or parents and dearest relations, there is much greater reason to love God, whose kindness to us far exceeds all the care and affection of the most intire friend, of the most indulgent parent. But of all the instances of his love, that of sending his Son for the redemption of mankind, is of the most endearing nature, and therefore observe with what a variety of tender expressions the apostle describes it. [p] God, who is rich in mercy, says he, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved,) and hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus: that, in the age to come, he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness to us through Christ Jesus; for by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Here is grace, and gift, and kindness, exceeding riches of grace, and great love, and riches of mercy, and these, if duly attended to, cannot fail, one would think, of kindling a reciprocal flame of love in our hearts; which is therefore more peculiarly due to God, because,

His being the author of love in us.

3. HIMSELF is the only author and cause of this affection in us. [q] That we have a bias in our natures, inclining to what is good in general, and which the soul can no more controul, than the

n Isa. vi. 2. o Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. p Eph. ii. 4, &c.
q Norris's Discourses, Vol. III.

ſhe can the motion of the heart or pulſe, is obvious to any one that obſerves his own particular make and conſtitution. Now, if there is ſuch an impreſſion in our nature, we may aſk the queſtion, whether it is from ourſelves, or from God. If from ourſelves, how comes it to paſs that we cannot command or ſtop it? were we the authors of this motion, we ſhould certainly have power over it, and be able to manage and reſtrain it, as we ſaw fit: but ſince we cannot do this, we may well conclude that it is not a thing of our own production. And if not of our own production, then certainly it came from God, for who ſhould be the author of what is natural and neceſſary in us, but he that is the author of our nature itſelf? Love is the ſame in the moral and intellectual world, that motion is in the natural; and, as we make God to be the author of natural motion, ſo there is as much reaſon to eſteem him the author of our love. But now, if God be the author and cauſe of our love, he doubtleſs has an abſolute right and title to it. For what is it that gives him a right to the whole world, but his production of it? Why has he a right to any of us, but becauſe we are his creatures? Why a right to all our powers and faculties, and to all the ſervice of them, but becauſe he produces and ſuſtains them; becauſe in him we live, move, and have our being? But now, if God does as much produce our love, as he does our being, then has he the ſame right to our love, that he has to any part of our nature, and it is an injury and injuſtice done him, whenever we transfer it, in any great degree, to any other object; ſince, to love God with all our hearts, &c. cannot but imply thus much, that we love him in a peculiar and ſuperlative manner, in a manner, wherein we muſt not love any thing beſides. Our friends and relations, our neighbours and acquaintance may have ſome ſhare of our love and eſteem, but nothing muſt be loved above God, nothing equally with God, much leſs contrary to, and againſt him; nothing muſt have the heart ſo intirely as he, and nothing that oppoſes him, muſt have it at all; being God is to be loved principally, and for himſelf; other things only ſecondarily, and in ſubordination to him.

II. How

r Newcome's Sermons.

s Our ingenious Mr Norris is not content with a ſupremacy of love given to God, and a ſubordination to his creatures, but with great earneſtneſs contends, that God only is to be loved, and that other creatures are not to be loved at all: and the method of his arguing is, That the ſenſation we feel upon the approach of any outward object is not in our bodies, but in our ſouls and ſpirits; that this ſenſation is not cauſed by any natural efficacy in the object itſelf, but by the pure agency of God impreſſing it; "that God, and only God (for theſe are "his words) acts in us, and is the true and proper cauſe of all our ſenſations, "of all that pain and pleaſure we feel by the mediation of the corporeal and "ſenſible world; that it is not the ſun, for inſtance, that enlightens us, but "God by the ſun; not the fire that gives us heat, but God by the fire; neither "is it the moſt delicate fruit, or the richeſt perfume, that delights either our "taſte or our ſmell, but it is God alone that raiſes pleaſure in us by the occa-"ſion of theſe bodies." This is the poſition which he proves at large, and from

II. How then ſhall we reſolve ourſelves in this great and important queſtion, whether we love God in the manner we ought to do? why, we muſt attend to the genuine fruits and properties of human love, and thence make the eſtimate of the nature of our love towards God. Now,

The properties and ſigns of our love to God

1. † EVERY man we ſee eſteems what he loves to be lovely, and what he ſo eſteems in another, he wiſhes to be poſſeſſed of himſelf, that ſo, becoming like unto him, he may appear as lovely in the eyes of his beloved, as his beloved is in his. And, in like manner, if we love God, we muſt neceſſarily eſteem him exceeding lovely and endearing, and, under this eſteem, muſt be naturally led to reſemble him in all thoſe amiable things that ſo much endear him to us. Did we love him indeed for his eternity, or his power, or his immenſity, we might wiſh to be like him, but all in vain; becauſe, in theſe perfections, we are not capable of imitating him: but the beauties for which we love him are his goodneſs, and wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and mercy, &c. all which are matter of our imitation, and may be tranſcribed into our natures. So that if we love God we cannot but deſire to reſemble him in thoſe things for which we love him; and theſe being all of an imitable nature, our deſire of reſembling him will provoke our beſt endeavours to be pure, as he is pure; juſt, as he is juſt; and merciful, as he is merciful.

2. THE greateſt ambition of love is, to appear amiable in the eyes of its beloved; and that it may do ſo, it ſtudiouſly avoids whatever may be diſpleaſing or diſtaſteful to it, and induſtriously endeavours to adorn itſelf with ſuch obliging graces, that are apt to endear and recommend it. And ſo, if we love God, we cannot but deſire to appear lovely to him, and that deſire, if it be

from hence he argues in this manner: "If God be the only true cauſe that "acts upon our ſpirits, and produces our pleaſure, then he only does us good, "he only perfects our being, and makes us happy; and if he only does us good, "he only is our good; and if he only is our good, then he only is lovely, or "the proper object of our love; and if he only is lovely, then it is plain that "we ought to love none but him, and him intirely." Or to argue backwards, —"We are to love nothing but what is lovely; nothing is lovely but what is "good; nothing is good but what does us good; nothing does us good but what "cauſes pleaſure in us; nothing cauſes pleaſure in us but God; therefore we "are to love nothing but God." I ſay, nothing but God, for he only is the author of all our pleaſure, and in him we not only live, move, and have our being, but have alſo all the joy and comfort of our being. Whatever degree of good we have received, we have received it from him; whatever we enjoy, we enjoy it in him; and whatever we expect, we expect it from him; with whom is the well of life, (Pſal. xxxvi. 9.) and in whoſe ſight we hope to ſee light; and therefore we are to love none but him, and him with the whole heart, ſoul, and mind, with the full weight of our deſires, with the whole activity of our love. Norris's Diſcourſes, Vol. III. That the ſaints and angels in heaven, who have their ſervice accompanied with the viſion of God, love God in this manner, cannot be queſtioned; but I very much doubt, whether, in this ſublime ſenſe, the precept was either intended, or can indeed be practiſed, in our preſent ſtate, where natural appetites are ſo ſtrong, and the relations, wherein we ſtand toward one another, ſo many.

† Scott's Works, Vol. II.

be ſincere, muſt neceſſarily engage us to acquire whatever is pleaſing, and to avoid whatever is hateful in his ſight. Now virtue and true goodneſs are the only beauties that endear us to God; as, on the contrary, ſin and wickedneſs are the only deformities for which he deteſts us: and therefore, as we would approve our love to God, we muſt flee from ſin, and from every appearance of evil, leſt they turn away his eyes from us; and, to conciliate his good graces, [u] give all diligence to add to our faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, godlineſs; and to godlineſs, brotherly-kindneſs, &c. for if theſe things be in us, and abound, they will make us acceptable to God, as being partakers of the divine nature.

3. AGAIN: nothing is more uneaſy than the mind of a lover when ſeparated from the object of his affections. His thoughts, his dreams, his wiſhes, and deſires run continually upon it; nor can he recover his eaſe and tranquillity, till he is happily reſtored to his former enjoyment. And, in like manner, † when God, for the trial of our faith or patience, hides his face from us for a ſeaſon, either not affording us that ready aid in diſtreſs, or comfort in our obedience, or pleaſure in our devotion, which we formerly experienced; if love reſide in our hearts, it will ſurely diſpoſe them to ſenſible grief, and inſpire them with ſuch ardent petitions as theſe; [x] Hide not thy face from thy ſervant; for I am in trouble: Turn unto me, according to the multitude of thy mercies, and draw nigh unto my ſoul, and ſave it. But eſpecially, when [y] our iniquities, as the prophet expreſſes it, have ſeparated between our God and us, and our ſins have hid his face from us; when that thick cloud hath eclipſed the light of his countenance, and intercepted his gracious influences; then if any love be alive in our breaſts, it will prompt us, with the good men of old, in their penitential agonies, ſorely to bewail our wretched condition. There will be [z] no ſoundneſs in our fleſh, nor reſt in our bones; [a] our ſpirit will be overwhelmed within us, and our heart within us deſolate, till, by an humble deprecation, we have regained ſome glimpſe of God's favour, and are in hopes of being re-inſtated in our poſſeſſion of him.

4. ONCE more. Love we know is a bold and vigorous paſſion: it makes weak things ſtrong, and warms and animates the heart with ſuch a generous fire, as diſdains all oppoſition, and out-braves the greateſt dangers and difficulties. If therefore we love God ſincerely, our love will quicken our endeavours to ſerve him, and carry us with ſuch a ſpirit and alacrity, through all the weary ſtages of our duty, that it will be our joy and recreation to do his will. The more difficulties we meet in our way, the more will they whet our activity, as being proper opportunities to manifeſt the ſincerity of our love, and thereby to

[u] 2 Pet. i. 5, 6. † Barrow's Works, Vol. I. [x] Pſal. lxix. 17, &c. [y] Iſa. lix. 2. [z] Pſal. xxxviii. 3. [a] Ibid. cxlii. 3, 4.

recommend our ſervices to our beloved. And in this ſenſe I conceive theſe words of St John, [b] herein is our love made perfect, *i. e.* this will try the perfection of our love to God, namely that we may have boldneſs in the day of judgment, *i. e.* [c] that, in the time of danger, when we are brought before rulers and judges, and are in peril of loſing our lives for the cauſe of Chriſt, we then manfully confeſs him, and ſeal the truth of our teſtimony with the price of our blood.

False measures herein.

THESE are the genuine ſigns and properties of the love of God in our hearts: and from hence we may obſerve the great miſtake that ſeveral perſons may lie under, in their computation of this matter; ſuch, I mean, as meaſure their affection to God by the mere impreſſion of ſenſitive paſſion: who, becauſe, upon ſome affecting repreſentations of his amiable perfections, they feel in themſelves the ſame emotions, they are wont to do, when they fall in love with other things, do inſtantly conclude that they are infinitely in love with God: whereas all this is, many times nothing elſe but the effect of an amorous complexion, tinctured and inflamed with religious ideas, which is the moſt diſtant thing imaginable from the virtue of divine love. [d] For, as there are ſincerely good men, that cannot raiſe their ſenſitive paſſions in their religious offices; that are heartily ſorry for their ſins, and yet cannot weep for them; and do intirely love God, and delight in his ſervice, and yet cannot move their blood and ſpirits into the raviſhing tranſports of love and joy; ſo are there many groſs hypocrites that have not the leaſt tincture of true piety, who yet, in their religious exerciſes, can put themſelves into wonderful extaſies of bodily paſſion; can pour out their confeſſions in floods of tears, and make their hearts dilate into raptures of love and joy: and yet all the while this is no more than the different temper of mens bodies, which in ſome is calm and ſedate, and not eaſily to be diſturbed; in others, is ſoft and tender, and ſo very ſuſceptible of impreſſion, that any frivolous fancy can raiſe a commotion in them. Unleſs therefore we are minded to deceive ourſelves in this important affair, we muſt not truſt to ſuch fallacious evidences as theſe, but try our love of God by his own touch-ſtone, viz. by our obedience to his heavenly will; for ſo himſelf hath inſtructed us, [e] ye are my friends if ye do whatſoever I command you; for [f] he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.

Means to attain it.

HOW then ſhall we raiſe in our minds this affection, and by what means ſhall we improve and cultivate the love of God in our hearts? The apoſtle has directed us to the proper method; love not the world, neither the things which are in the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

b 1 John iv. 17. c Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. d Scott's Works, Vol. II. e John xv. 14. f Ibid. xiv. 21.

him. [g] We must therefore call home our roving appetites, which run gadding abroad after worldly objects, fondly pursuing every shadow and phantom of pleasure that they meet with: this love of ours, I say, which runs out into so many little streams, and is dispersed among so many objects in the visible world, we must collect together and cast into one great channel, and let it flow in one great tide towards God. And indeed, [h] how can we reflect upon the beauties of his nature, his goodness and justice, and mercy, &c. without being charmed and captivated with the love of them? How can we think of the stupendous love which he hath expressed towards us, in giving us our being, and all the blessings we enjoy, in preparing an heaven of immortal joys for us, and sending his Son from thence to conduct us thither, without being all inflamed with love to him? Our business therefore must be, to set ourselves seriously to the contemplation of God, of the loveliness of his nature, and of his infinite kindness to us and to all his creation; to be constant and diligent in prayer and supplication, in praising him, and celebrating the memory of his mercies, in consulting the scriptures, hearing the word, and attending to all other religious offices and employments; for in these the God of heaven communicates himself, and by these divine love is infused into the soul.

2. Of Delight in GOD.

TO delight [i] in God is to possess our minds with such a proper sense of his goodness, as may produce an habitual comfort and pleasure in the contemplation of him; as may excite us to diligence and alacrity in his worship and service; to approach his altars with joy and thanksgiving; to hear his word with reverence and attention; to converse with him here in meditation and prayer; and to long to enjoy what his beatific presence imparts hereafter. This is the duty. And our business must be, 1. To point out the reasonableness and expediency of it; and then, 2. To observe by what means we may be enabled to perform it. To delight in God, what.

I. Now all the delectable things in nature, which we either know or can imagine, are but of three kinds, natural, moral and heavenly. In the first consist the pleasures of the world; in the second, the pleasures of the godly; and in the third, the pleasures of the blessed: and, to evince the reasonableness of our delighting in God, we shall separately observe how each of these remits us to God, as an object much more deserving of our affections and complacency. The reasonableness of it.

1. WONDERFUL is the variety of the things in nature, that are accommodated to our liking, and their power of pleasing us is From the consideration of natural,

[g] Newcome's Sermons. [h] Stillingfleet's Sermons. [i] Young's Sermons, Vol. I.

is but too manifeſt from the ſtrange aſcendant they have over our affections: and yet all theſe things do naturally remit us to ſomething better and more ſatisfying, as we muſt needs acknowledge, whenever we reflect on their tranſient and empty nature, and how, by reaſon either of their offenſive mixtures or neceſſary decay, they leave our ſouls lean, and pining in the very midſt of their enjoyments. This is the thing, which to confirm our experience, God himſelf has been pleaſed to ſignify to us, when he complains of his people that [k] they had forſaken him, the fountain of living water, and had hewed to themſelves ciſterns, broken ciſterns, that would hold no water: for, by comparing himſelf to a fountain of living water, he plainly intimates, that he is the ſource of ſolid refreſhment, of ſincere and laſting delectation, ſuch as is adequate to the deſires of our ſoul; and by comparing all worldly enjoyments to broken ciſterns that can hold no water, he likewiſe intimates how vain and imperfect, how tranſient and uncertain they are, how they delude our hopes, and fly from our embraces in the very time of fruition.

NOR are they only deceitful in their uſe, but very unſatisfying in their nature: they ſerve us only when we have leaſt need of them, not in the bitterneſs of affliction, not in the deſtitutions of the ſoul; whereas a ſpiritual commerce with God, which creates a ſure confidence in him, is a ſteady enjoyment, which no accident can impair, which, in the multitude of ſorrows, will refreſh us with comforts, and, as holy Job expreſſes it, [m] give us ſongs in the night, *i. e.* give us conſolation in the night of affliction, and in the gloomineſs of human deſpair. Complain therefore we may of the vanity and emptineſs of all worldly joys; but, at the ſame time, we ought to remember what the prophet tells us, viz. that it is from the Lord that they are ſo, viz. that he has purpoſely deſigned that the good things of this life ſhould not be ſatisfying, nor able to anſwer that earneſt deſire of happineſs, which he hath made connatural to the ſoul of man, with an intent to teach us, that he intended to fill up the meaſure of our deſires, and to be himſelf the delight we ſo much long for.

Moral, 2. MORAL delight is that, which ſprings from the conſcience of well-doing, [n] of which, though the wicked are not utterly inſenſible (becauſe it is often felt to ariſe from any ſingle and caſual act of virtue) yet are its refreſhments, in a peculiar manner, the portion of the regenerate. When the principles of goodneſs come once to be fixed in a man, and his virtue is grown conſtant and uniform, it is then that this never fails to ſupply him with a ſtable ſerenity and ſatisfaction of mind, not to be equalled by all the joys of ſenſuality. Now, if conſcience may be thus delighted in, there is abundant reaſon why God, who is the great rewarder of conſcience, ſhould have a much

k Jer. ii. 13. m Job xxxv. 10. n Young's Sermons, Vol. I.

uch larger ſhare of our joy and complacency; eſpecially con-
ering that the delight which ariſes from a conſcience of well-
ing, is nothing elſe but a boding inſtinct that there will be a
ture reward.

A meſſenger, for inſtance, is ſent to acquaint a ſubject, that
r his loyalty and other good ſervices done the government,
s prince is reſolved to promote him to honour, to make him
vernor of ſuch a province, or ruler of ſuch a city: the meſ-
nger, in ſuch a caſe, may be received with expreſſions of joy
d kind entertainment; but certainly the ſubject forgets his
ty, if he transfers all his acknowledgments upon the meſſen-
r, and overlooks the beneficence of his prince. Juſt ſo ſtands
e caſe between God and our conſciences. Our conſciences are
r remembrancers of a future reward, which, upon the diſ-
arge of any duty faithfully, pleaſantly whiſper within, thus,
d thus ſhall God reward thee for it; and with this welcome
eſſage we may well be allowed to ſolace and delight ourſelves;
t certainly we forget our duty if we ſuffer our minds ſo
holly to be taken up with it, as not to look up to the fountain
om whence it comes. In a word, he that attends to the
erations of his own mind, may eaſily perceive that there is ſo
eceſſary a relation between God and our conſciences, that
henever we conceive any pleaſure from the remembrance of
y good action, that pleaſurable movement of our conſcience
a natural call to us to delight in God, who is the ſole foun-
ation, and hope, and rewarder of it.

3. THE ſame leſſon we may likewiſe learn from the laſt kind of delectable things, I mean thoſe of heaven; which though it be a ſtate ſo pleaſant and tranſcendently happy, that the apoſtle tells us the very expectation of it is ſufficient to work in us [o] a rejoicing with joy unſpeakable and full of glory; yet we are to remember that the root and foundation of all the eternal beatitudes that are there is God: that it is not in ſhort the place heaven, but rather the God of heaven that is the reward of his ſaints, procuring them endleſs felicity from the light of his countenance upon them, and the influence and emanations of his bounty towards them. And hence it is that the royal Pſalmiſt declares to God, [p] Thou art my hope, and my portion in the land of the living. By the land of the living he means heaven (for earth is no more than the land of the dying) and yet he does not look upon that land, but merely upon God in that land, as his hope and his portion: to which purpoſe we find the apoſtle St Paul, [q] in ſpeaking of the ſtate of God's eternal kingdom, clearing and determining the matter in two words, when he tells us, that in that ſtate, God ſhall be all in all, every thing to every ſaint; for all that they can wiſh, all that they can conceive, he will be to every one of them; will anſwer

and heavenly delights.

o 1 Pet. i. 8. p Pſal. cxlii. 5. q 1 Cor. xv. 28.

ſwer all their deſires, provide for all their wants, and fill up th immenſe capacities of enjoyment, which he hath ſeated in ever one's ſoul. Since God then, of all the kinds of delectabl things that we can experience, either here or hereafter, is th only proper object of our joy, there is no doubt to be made, bu that, in point of duty and intereſt both, we ought to place th chief of our comfort and complacency in him; conſidering witha that this will be a means both to make us truly religious here and eternally happy hereafter.

The expediency of it.

IT is without all controverſy true, that there is no principl in human nature, that will ſo powerfully engage us in the ſer vice of God, and ſo effectually recommend our performances t him as that of love, which tunes our wills into an harmony wit his, and makes our reſpect to his commandments become uni verſal. [r] Now between love and delight there is ſo great a affinity, that we can hardly diſtinguiſh them: what we love w always delight in; and what we delight in we always love and if we diſtinguiſh them as nicely as we can, the difference i only this—Love is the deſire of our object, and delight is th complacency that accompanies deſire; ſo that delight preſup poſes, and implies in it love. Upon which it follows, that i we delight in our maſter, we muſt neceſſarily love him; and i we love him, we ſhall certainly keep his commandments. Th man that addicts himſelf to his luſts makes them his maſter; an though their ſervice be hard and their wages mean, yet never theleſs he ſtiles them pleaſures, and ſwallows them greedil down under that gilded name. He watches and labours, h waits and ſolicits, he begs, and bears, and denies himſelf, an all with content. Now would we but transfer our affections t God, and learn to love and delight in him thus ſincerely, th very ſame thing would happen to us; his ſervice we ſhould ac count our pleaſure, and the moſt rigid duties of it willingly ſub mit to, as happy occaſions, not only to ſignalize our love here but,

2. To ſecure our title to the glories and felicities of our ce leſtial inheritance hereafter. The chief enjoyments of heaven as we ſaid before, conſiſt not ſo much in the pleaſures of th place, as in our partaking of the divine perfections, and ſeein God face to face. And therefore, if we do not accuſtom ourſelves to delight in God, while we abide in this world, w can never be capable of enjoying heaven, which, in effect, i nothing elſe but God himſelf. For be the place never ſo beau tiful and raviſhing, yet that it can afford no ſuch ſatisfaction without the enjoyment of God, it is plain from that paſſage o Job, where Satan is ſaid to have [s] preſented himſelf among th ſons of God, *i. e.* to have been in heaven, and mixed himſel with the bleſſed there; and yet it is certain he was never th happie

[r] Young's Sermons, Vol. I. [s] Job. ii. 1.

happier for all this; but, being deprived of the light of God's countenance, and taking no pleaſure in the beatific viſion, he, even in heaven, carried his hell about him: ſo impoſſible it is to enjoy heaven without ſome complacency in God. But now, when by long cuſtom and uſage we have brought our minds to this happy temper, to be habitually well pleaſed and delighted with God, ſo as to rejoice in his happineſs and acquieſce in his will, and meditate on his beauty and goodneſs, with unfeigned complacency of ſoul, we are then in the ſame ſtate (*i. e.* in kind, though not in degree) with the bleſſed ſaints above, and when we are called home to their habitations, ſhall carry along with us minds ready fitted and diſpoſed for their enjoyments.

Means of doing it.

IF ever therefore we deſire to partake of the beatitudes of heaven, and to live eternally in the view of that moſt lovely and moſt happy object, which is the conſtant feaſt and entertainment of glorified ſouls; this we muſt ſet ourſelves to do.—We muſt contemplate him with the eyes of our faith, approach him in our prayers, taſte him in his ordinances, and feel him in the comforts of well-doing. We muſt ſettle in our minds a ſtrict conformity to his laws, a generous diſdain of earthly things, a noble confidence in divine providence, and a ſtedfaſt and aſſured hope of an eternal and never-fading crown of glory; for theſe are the proper means to poſſeſs our ſouls with a ſteady delight and complacency in God, our only principle of living well, and of living for ever. We cannot however, but take notice, that ſince God in his own nature is ſo amiable, in his perfections ſo tranſcendent, in his laws ſo equitable, in his diſpenſations ſo gracious, and in every reſpect ſo encircled with charms, and inveſted with endearments, there muſt be ſome intervening hindrances, or otherwiſe no man of any tolerable ſenſe and ingenuity could forbear delighting in him. What therefore we think proper to do on this head, is to inſtance in ſome of the chief impediments of this kind, as well as the means that may be of uſe to remove them.

Ingredients to it.

1. Inconſideration.

1. WHAT I reckon then the firſt hindrance to this duty is inconſideration; for in this ſtate a man will not delight in God: and to this purpoſe, we find him complaining in that noted place of the prophet, † 'the ox knoweth his owner, *i. e.* loveth and takes pleaſure in its owner, and the aſs his maſter's crib; but Iſrael will not know me, Iſrael will not love and take pleaſure in me; and the reaſon of all follows, my people will not conſider. This is the cauſe, and where the cauſe is, the effect is neceſſary; for though amiableneſs is properly the parent, yet thought is both the midwife and nurſe of deſire; and be the object never ſo amiable and good, while we do not conſider it, it affects us no more than if it were none at all. If ever therefore we intend to bring our minds to take pleaſure in God, we muſt

† Iſaiah i. 3.

must be careful to rouſe ourſelves from this ſpiritual ſtupor, an every day appoint certain portions of our time, to be expende in contemplation and other religious exerciſes: I ſay, appoin and allot certain portions of our time; for without doing thi by the ſpecious delays which our deceitful hearts are able t ſuggeſt, we may poſſibly be prevailed with to neglect them a together.

2. Sin.

2. SIN and ſenſuality is another hindrance that puts us at greater diſtance from delighting in God; for in this ſtate w cannot do it: and the reaſon is, becauſe when once the ſou comes to ſerve under a complacency of things forbidden, it be comes groſs and fleſhly, and loſes its ſpiritual taſte and reliſh the wiſdom of God having contrived it ſo, that none ſhould b able to enjoy him who preſume to ſet up his creatures in com petition with him. That God therefore may reign in our af fections, and be the ſupreme object of our delight, it is neceſ ſary that we moderate our appetites in the enjoyment of ſuch things as are but too apt to engroſs them, and above all, tha we abſtain from ſin, and be conſtant in our duty. For this wil keep us in friendſhip, and reconcile our minds to God; an when we are reconciled, his excellencies will command our lov and admiration, which, when placed on him, will produce in u boundleſs joy and ſatisfaction.

3. Wrong apprehenſions of God.

3. BUT there is a worſe obſtruction ſtill to this duty, an that is ſad and uncomfortable apprehenſions of the nature o God; for in this caſe we dare not delight in him. To form conceptions of God, not according to the image of his word, bu according to mens particular tempers, has been a cuſtomary thing in all ages. The Stoics were a rigid ſort of people, an accordingly, their notion of God was, not that he governed him ſelf by the reaſon of things, but by a ſtern and inexorable fate Whether the doctrine of God's abſolute decrees has deſcende from the ſame original, we will not here diſpute; but to believe that he has determined a great part of mankind to eternal mi ſery, merely to ſhew the arbitrarineſs of his dominion, what a dark and cloudy ſcene does this draw over the face of the Al mighty, and, when we conſider it, how muſt it damp our re joicing in him, and every now and then ſtrike us with affright ment; unleſs we could be ſure of our own exception, which none, without a particular revelation, can? If therefore we would delight in God, and take pleaſure in the contemplation o him, we muſt be careful to repreſent him fairly to our minds not according to our own ſullen temper, but as he has repre ſented himſelf in ſcripture, in ſome ſuch lineaments as theſe viz. that he is a bountiful benefactor to his creation, and an uni verſal lover of ſouls, who would have all men be ſaved an come to the knowledge of the truth, and heartily contribute to their eternal welfare; that he leaves no art of love, or me-

thod

thod of kindneſs unattempted to do us good; calls us back when we have gone aſtray; upon our return graciouſly receives us; when he hath received us, fits us for happineſs; when he hath fitted us, abundantly rewards us; and when he hath rewarded us, everlaſtingly triumphs in our glory and happineſs. Theſe are thoughts truly worthy of God, and befitting the infinite goodneſs of his nature: they will kindle in our hearts a true love and delight in him, and make us ſerve him, at all times, with a chearful heart and liberal affections.

3. Of fearing GOD.

TO fear God, [u] is to have ſuch a due ſenſe of his majeſty, and holineſs, and juſtice, and goodneſs, as ſhall make us not dare to offend him; for each of theſe attributes is proper to raiſe a ſuitable fear in every conſidering mind. His majeſty, a fear, leſt we affront it by being irreverent; his holineſs, a fear, leſt we offend it by being carnal; his juſtice, a fear, leſt we provoke it by being preſumptuous; and his goodneſs, a fear, leſt we forfeit it by being unthankful. Upon which it follows, that the fear of God is, in a great meaſure, the ſame reverential affection which a dutiful and loving child pays to his parents, ſuch as will make him very careful in his whole behaviour, and reſtrain him from the commiſſion of ſin, even though God had threatened no puniſhment againſt it: and accordingly we ſhall, 1. Obſerve how reaſonable and beneficial this duty is; and then, 2. Suggeſt an argument or two to enforce it. To fear God, what

1. IF we reflect upon the many evils and calamities we are expoſed to in this life, we muſt agree that it is no ſmall happineſs to us, to have the paſſion of fear implanted in our nature. For, as in a town, alarmed by an enemy, a centinel is ſet to watch their approaches, and to prevent the danger of a ſurpriſe; ſo fear in the ſoul is appointed to this office, to watch when, and which way, all evils come upon us, and to give us timely warning of their coming, that either we may decline their attack, or be provided to receive it. But the ſame God, who hath given us fear, for a caution againſt evil in general, has, in the mean time, given us notice that his diſpleaſure is the greateſt of all evils; and therefore, as we account it a point of wiſdom to be watchful againſt other evils, ſo is it neceſſarily the higheſt point of wiſdom to be watchful againſt this. The reaſonableneſs of it.

* CONSIDERING indeed the infinite diſtance between God and us, as he is our maker, and we his creatures; as he is our benefactor, and we his dependents; as he is our ſupreme Lord, and we his ſubjects; and as he infinitely excels us in all the perfections of his nature, we cannot but eſteem him the only proper object of our dread and awful apprehenſions. For what are our ſhallow, and dark, and confuſed conceptions to that divine wiſ-

[u] Young's Sermons, Vol. I. * Stillingfleet's Sermons.

dom, by which he comprehends all the differences of times at one view, and has all the reaſons and poſſibilities of things lying open and naked before him? What is all the force of mankind, though collected into one, in compariſon of that divine power which gave being to the world, when it was not, and governs and orders all things in it with greater eaſe than we can move a finger? If we attend to theſe, I ſay, and ſeveral other properties of the divine nature, [x] ſhall not his excellency make us afraid, and his dread fall upon us? Eſpecially conſidering, that the beſt of men have ſins and guilt enough to make them apprehend the utmoſt expreſſes of his wrath: for, [y] if he charges his angels with folly, and the heavens are not clean in his ſight, how much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water, *i. e.* whoſe natural propenſity to evil is like that of the thirſty traveller, to drink of every brook that he meets in his way? [z] I have ſinned, therefore, ſays holy Job, in the anguiſh and bitterneſs of his ſoul, I have ſinned, and what ſhall I do unto thee, O thou preſerver of men? For thou writeſt bitter things againſt me, and makeſt me poſſeſs the iniquities of my youth.

AND indeed, when once God hath ſet himſelf to write bitter things againſt us, loſſes and croſſes, pains and diſeaſes, are ſome of his leaſt inflictions: he can ſend terrors into the ſoul, and by letting looſe our thoughts upon us, make us more miſerable than all the tyrants in the world can do by the moſt exquiſite torments. [a] The arrows of the Almighty are within me, ſays Job in ſuch circumſtances, the poiſon whereof drinketh up my ſpirit; the terrors of the Lord do ſet themſelves in array againſt me; and therefore he begs compaſſion from his friends, [b] Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of the Lord hath touched me. And indeed, conſidering how exceedingly heavy this hand is, when once it is raiſed to give the blow, that it cannot only [c] kill the body, but after it hath killed the body, has power to caſt both ſoul and body into hell, there to be tormented day and night for ever and ever, we cannot but break out into the Pſalmiſt's acknowledgment, [d] Thou, even thou, art to be feared; and who may ſtand in thy ſight, when once thou art angry?

Inſtances of our fearing man more than God.

BUT how much ſoever God deſerves to be feared, we cannot but obſerve, that nothing is more cuſtomary among us than to have our actions more influenced by the fear of man than of God. [e] Thus, when we commit any ſin in ſecret which we are afraid to commit openly; when we ſeek retirement and ſolitude, in order to cover our guilt from the cognizance of men, we then ſhew that the fear of man lays a greater reſtraint upon us than the fear of God; becauſe we dare not venture to do that in

x Job xiii. 11. y Ibid. iv. 18. and xv. 15, 16. z Ibid. vii. 20, and xiii. 26. a Ibid. vi. 4. b Ibid. xix. 21. c Luke xii. 4, 5. d Pſal. lxxvi. 7. e Smalridge's Sermons.

in the preſence of our fellow-creatures, which we preſume to do in the ſight of our great Creator. Again, when we affect to appear to the world religious and virtuous, but inſtead of taking care to be what we appear, put on the ſheep's cloathing only to hide the wolf, or the fox, or the goat, that lurks within, we then ſhew that the fear of man has greater efficacy upon us than the fear of God; ſince the one is ſtrong enough to make us hypocrites, but the other has not power to make us inwardly and ſincerely good. Again, when we are aſhamed of owning the principles of our religion, though we really do believe them, and, for fear of incurring the cenſure of preciſeneſs and ſingularity, affect to appear worſe than we really are, we then likewiſe ſhew that the fear of men awes us more than the fear of God; ſince the former cauſes us to ſmother that open profeſſion which the latter requires, but cannot prevail with us to make. Again, when we fall in with the unwarrantable cuſtoms of the world, and comply with the modiſh follies and vices of the age, or place, wherein we live, purely for fear of being thought unfaſhionable or ill-bred; this undue compliance is another proof of our fearing men more than God; ſince [f] our conformity to the world is the effect of the one, whilſt the other has not efficacy enough to make us be transformed, by the renewing of our mind, to do what is the good and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Once more; [g] when tribulation or perſecution ariſeth becauſe of the word, and, by and by, many are offended; when men abjure their religion to ſave their fortunes, or their lives, and, to avoid a preſent trouble, run headlong into ſuch pernicious practices as will render them obnoxious to everlaſting perdition, it is undeniable, that, in this inſtance, they are under greater apprehenſions from man than God; ſince bodily death, which is the utmoſt that men can threaten, ſeems ſo formidable, that, to eſcape it, they run the riſque of that eternal death which ſhall be the final lot of thoſe, [h] who, denying Chriſt before men, ſhall be denied by him before his Father which is in heaven.

As evident therefore as it is, that men commit thoſe ſins in ſecret which they dare not commit openly, and take more care to appear, than really to be devout: that, in a looſe and licentious age, they chuſe rather to break the laws of God, than to be out of faſhion, and to diſown themſelves under the influence of religion, than incur the imputation of ſingularity; that, in times of perſecution, they fall away from the truth, and make ſhipwreck of their faith, when ſtorms ariſe; ſo evident it is, that, in the conduct of their lives, they are more ſwayed by the fear of man, than they are by the fear of God. But now what reaſon can be given for this unreaſonable and extravagant conduct? The beſt that can be given, is but a bad one; but the beſt, as I take it, is this,—That we generally look upon men, as implacable in their reſentments, Why it is ſo.

f Rom. xii. 2. g Matth. xiii. 21. h Ibid. x. 33.

resentments, but God, as gracious, and merciful, and apt to forgive. "[i] Should we therefore offend men by a stiff and unseasonable virtue, we might incur the effects of their displeasure, and should they once be angry with us, we might not be able, with all our care, to recover their good graces; or should an ill opinion be formed, or an ill character once spread abroad of us, it might perhaps be out of our power to regain a good one: the danger therefore of offending men being so great, and the mischief of it so irretrievable, we cannot be too careful to avoid it. But, on the other hand, if we should, by any sinful compliance, offend God, besides that the punishment is at a greater distance, we have sufficient grounds to believe that we can prevent it by repentance: for [k] he will not deal with us after our sins, if we renounce them, nor reward us according to our iniquities, if we are reclaimed from them; [l] as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy above the mercy of men: as far as the east is from the west, so far, upon our repentance, will he remove our transgressions from us:" and therefore, since God is so slow to anger, and so ready to forgive; since men are so easy to be offended, and so difficult to be intreated, this exceeding mercy of God, which [m] the Psalmist thought a good ground for his being feared, is often the reason why man is more dreaded than God.

The folly and sinfulness hereof

THE prophet however has, in a very lively manner, both confuted and exposed this wicked and unreasonable conduct; [n] Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass, and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth? Who art thou? If thou be a rational creature, as God designed thee, think if there be any manner of equality between the two objects, between him that created the whole universe out of nothing, and him whose breath is in his nostrils, and that breath no longer there than his Creator is pleased to lend it; and if thou art ashamed of the comparison, then [o] fear not the strongest confederacy of men, as the same prophet excellently exhorts, nor be afraid; but sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be thy fear, and let him be thy dread.

The benefits of fearing God.

THE observation which Solomon has made is a very true one, that [p] the fear of man bringeth a snare, exposes us to temptations, and makes us liable to be seduced from our duty; but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe. For how shocking must the frowns and menaces of great men be to such as are destitute of this armour of proof, [q] which fortifies the mind,

i Smalridge's Sermons. k Psal. ciii. 10. l Ibid. ciii. 11, 12. m Ibid. cxxxiv. n Isa. li. 12, 13. o Ibid. viii. 12, 13. p Prov. xxix. 25. q Young's Sermons, Vol. I.

mind, and works it to a firmneſs, like that of the three Iſraelites in Babylon, who, when the queſtion was put, whether they would worſhip the image, or be caſt into the furnace, replied with all compoſedneſs, [r] O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to anſwer thee about this matter, *i. e.* in an inſtant we can reſolve what we are to do in this caſe, becauſe we are reſolved long ago to ſuffer any thing rather than God's diſpleaſure? How galling muſt the fears, about the things of this life, be to one who carries no eye to the bleſſings of another? How muſt every croſs accident grieve him, and every ſlight affliction wound him to the heart? But he that fears God has a preſervative againſt every thing of this kind. Before they come he fears them not, becauſe he is ſecure of the good providence of God on his ſide; and when they are come, he has wherewithal to break their blow, becauſe he has aſſurance of recompence at leaſt, if not of relief. But above all, how amazing muſt the fear of death be to him that fears not God? Death! that, like a dark paſſage to a comfortleſs priſon, puts an end to all that he would have, and a beginning to all that he would not. What agonies of dread and horror muſt every reflection upon this inject into his guilty ſoul? But he that lives under the ſenſe and fear of God, has prepared his mind beforehand to meet the prince of terrors, and ſeeing it is appointed for all men once to die, pays this laſt debt of nature with chearfulneſs, and leaves the ſtage of life as one that is aſſured of his paſſage to a bleſſed eternity.

WELL therefore might holy Job ſay, that the fear of the Lord, that is wiſdom; ſince it not only makes us eaſy, by curing our other fears, while we are here, but happy likewiſe, by ſecuring our chief concern and intereſt hereafter. "This then "is wiſdom, not in ſemblance, but in deed; not parcel-wiſdom, "but wiſdom intire; not wiſdom for the bye, but wiſdom for "the main; not wiſdom for a day, but wiſdom for ever." All our other attainments will avail us nothing. Our knowledge of arts and ſciences, of laws and policies, of trade and buſineſs, will never make us wiſe, till ſuch a time as the fear of God preſides over what we know, and directs it to the purpoſes of an holy life. And therefore we may well be allowed to inquire, where is the place of this wiſdom? And by what means ſhall we poſſeſs our ſouls with this beneficial paſſion?

The means of attaining it.

1. THE royal Pſalmiſt has told us his own practice, and therein given us a very wholeſome admonition; [s] I have ſet the Lord always before me, had a continual ſenſe of his preſence with, and inſpection over me, and therefore, [t] when I conſider, I am afraid of him. And indeed, [u] if the conſideration of never ſo mean a perſon's being preſent with us, is ſometimes ſufficient to reſtrain us from a ſinful or indecent action, how much more careful ought we to be of our behaviour before that holy and Divine

r Dan. iii. 16. s Pſal. xvi. 8. t Job xxiii. 15. u Fiddes's Sermons.

Divine Majesty, who fills heaven and earth, and whose notice nothing can escape? Do we then really consider what it is to have an eternal God a constant witness and observer of all our actions, and even of all our thoughts and intentions; that he keeps a perfect register of them, and enters them down into books, which we are told will be opened at the great day of accounts, and out of which we must be judged? If we do consider these things, I say, and yet are not thereby restrained from sinning; there is but one argument more that can be supposed to work upon our fears; and that is,

2. THE consideration of God's justice and severity against sin: for [x] if God spared not the angels that sinned, as St Peter argues, but cast them down to hell; and spared not the old world, but brought in the flood upon the ungodly; turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, and making them an example to those that after should live wickedly: nay, what is more, if God spared not his own Son, when, having no sin of his own, he undertook only to be the proxy and representative of sinners, how much more will he not spare them whose impieties have provoked his wrath, and whose damnation, upon that account, slumbereth not? Knowing then the terrors of the Lord, our flesh may well tremble because of him, and reason good we have to be afraid of his judgments; that judgment especially which will end in an eternity of happiness or misery, and therefore calls upon us daily to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

4. Of trusting in GOD.

To trust in God, what.

TO trust in God, is to affect our minds with such a due sense of his wisdom, and power, and goodness, and faithfulness, as may engage us to commit all our concerns to his providence, to depend upon his help and protection in all the difficulties and dangers, and upon his care and provision for us, in all the wants and necessities that can befal us: for each of these divine attributes do point out the duty of our reliance upon God. [y] His wisdom teaches us that he has all proper knowledge of our condition, and is therefore duly qualified to take the administration of our affairs into his hands; his power, that he wanteth not ability to deliver us from the calamities under which we labour, and to bestow upon us the benefits that we want; his goodness, that he wanteth not disposition to accomplish his gracious purposes towards us, and, whenever it is fit and expedient for us, readily to grant what we request; and his faithfulness, that having promised to be our patron and protector, he cannot deny himself, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his mouth. Upon these foundations is our reliance upon God established;

[x] 2 Pet ii. 4, &c. [y] Wilkins on Natural Religion.

eſtabliſhed; and our purpoſe muſt be, 1. To inquire by what reaſons and inducements we are encouraged to it; and, 2. By what means and conſideration we may promote it.

I. ONE great requiſite in any friend, or patron, from whom we may have expectance of protection or relief, is, that he be acquainted with the nature of our circumſtances, otherwiſe, be his inclination never ſo much in our favour, we may be undone before his helping hand is ſtretched out to us. But now in God, [a] whoſe underſtanding is infinite, and whoſe eye every moment has the whole creation under his view, there can be no riſque of this kind. For be our condition what it will; if inward grief and uneaſineſs, our moſt ſecret thoughts, and moſt inward groanings are not hid from him; if bodily pain or ſickneſs, he underſtands the beſt means of help, and the propereſt ſeaſons of applying them; if poverty or want, he knows where all the riches of the world are ſtored, and can [b] fill, when he pleaſes, our belly with hid treaſures; or, laſtly, if danger or diſtreſs, he is infinitely wiſe to contrive ſuch ways of ſafety and deliverance as will ſurmount all thoſe difficulties and perplexities which would put human wiſdom to a loſs. So that upon the conſideration of this one attribute, we may take up the words of the Pſalmiſt, and ſay, [b] God is our hope and ſtrength, a very preſent help in time of trouble. God is in the midſt of us, therefore ſhall we not be removed; God ſhall help us, and that right early; for the Lord of hoſts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.

The reaſonableneſs thereof.

1. From the divine attributes.

2. BUT it is not enough that our friend be acquainted with our condition, unleſs he has power likewiſe to remove the evil we complain of, and to procure us the good we want: and therefore we may obſerve, [c] that there is nothing which either nature has made, or art has contrived in ſuch a manner, as may beſt ſerve for our defence, from which the Pſalmiſt does not borrow alluſions, in order to excite in us a lively ſenſe of the mighty power of God to defend his ſervants in the needful time of trouble; [d] The Lord is my rock, and my fortreſs, and my deliverer: my God, my ſtrength in whom I will truſt; my buckler, the horn alſo of my ſalvation, and my high tower: and to ſhew his great care and proviſion for our wants, [e] the Lord, ſays he, delivereth the ſouls of his ſervants, and all they that put their truſt in him ſhall not be deſtitute. Thoſe indeed that throw themſelves out of the providence of God, and ſet up for the carvers of their own fortune, may [f] earn perhaps the wages of iniquity, but putting them into a bag with holes, as the prophet expreſſes it, they find themſelves often defeated; but though [g] the lions (to underſtand the word for once in a metaphorical ſenſe, for ſuch as live by plundering and oppreſſing

2 Pſal. cxlvii. 5. a Ibid. xvii. 14. b Ibid. xlvi. 1, &c. c Smalridge's Sermons: d Pſal. xviii. 2. e Ibid. xxxiv. 22. f Hag. i. 6. g Pſal. xxxiv. 10.

ing others) do lack, and ſuffer hunger, yet they, that ſeek the Lord, ſhall want no manner of thing that is good.

3. NOR is it enough that our friend have it in his power to ſupply our wants and ſtand by us in danger, unleſs he is willing and diſpoſed ſo to do; and therefore to remove all doubts of this kind, the ſame Pſalmiſt hath aſſured us, that God is not only eſſentially and immutably good, but good univerſally, good everlaſtingly, good to the pious without reſerve, and good to the wicked too, if they will but repent of their ſins and live; for the Lord is good, and doth good; [h] his tender mercies are over all his works; and, as [i] he preventeth the righteous with the bleſſings of goodneſs, ſo is [k] he ready to forgive the ſinner, and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon him. Conditions in life make no diſtinction with him; for [l] lo! the poor crieth, and he heareth him, yea, and ſaveth him out of all his trouble. Many, in our proſperous days, will be forward enough in their profeſſions of kindneſs and zeal, but when trouble begins to ariſe, they think it convenient then to withdraw, and leave us to ſtruggle alone with our misfortune: but now [m] the very thing, which among men is uſually the chief cauſe, that takes off their affection and kindneſs, with God is an argument of a contrary nature: for though his mercy and goodneſs extend to all, yet are they more eſpecially concerned for ſuch as are in a ſtate of miſery, the fatherleſs, the widow, the priſoners, the poor, the ſtranger, the friendleſs, and ſuch as have no helper. And from a ſenſe of this, we find the devout in all ages truſting not in man, nor his fallacious friendſhip, but fleeing to God for ſhelter, as they found the cloud approaching. [n] Our fathers truſted in thee, and thou didſt deliver them; they called upon thee, and were holpen: they put their truſt in thee, and were not confounded; wherefore go not far from me, O Lord; for trouble is hard at hand, and there is none to help me: thou art my ſuccour; haſte thee to help me, to deliver my ſoul from the ſword, my darling from the power of the dogs.

4. NOR is it ſufficient that a perſon have knowledge, and power, and goodneſs enough, to be a fit inſtrument of our relief and ſupport, unleſs, in ſome meaſure, he be under obligations to do it for us: and, in like manner, though [o] we may deſire and expect unpromiſed favours from God, yet we can infallibly be ſure of no bleſſings but what he, in his word, has been graciouſly pleaſed to promiſe. Now promiſes of help to thoſe that are righteous, and put their truſt in God, are innumerable; and on theſe promiſes, if our conſciences bear us a comfortable teſtimony, we may ſecurely rely; for [p] the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are opened unto their cries; and though their

h Pſal. cxlv. 9. i Ibid. xxi. 3. k Ibid. lxxxvi 5. l Ibid. xxxiv. 6.
m Wilkins on Natural Religion. n Pſal. xxii. 4, &c. o Smalridge's Sermons.
p Pſal. xxxiv. 15, &c.

their afflictions be many, yet he ſhall deliver them out of them all. He ſhall redeem the ſouls of his ſervants, and none of them that truſt in him ſhall be deſolate. Having therefore theſe gracious promiſes, we may, with undaunted courage, ſpeak the words, and take up the reſolution of the Pſalmiſt; [q] God is our refuge, and ſtrength, therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the midſt of the ſea; though the waters thereof rage and ſwell, and though the mountains ſhake at the tempeſt of the ſame. Such bold expreſſions as theſe, have been uttered by brave and gallant men among the heathens; [r] but what was extravagant in the mouths of ſuch as had no ſtrength but their own to bear them up; no proſpect of any other recompence than that of an imaginary fame for behaving under difficulties with magnanimity; that, when ſpoken by one, who has the aid of God to ſupport him under ſufferings, and the promiſes of God to reward his patience and conſtancy, either with the bleſſings of this life, or with the glories of the next, is a wiſe, ſolid, and well-weighed reſolution.

THUS, if we look into the nature of God, and his moſt ſacred attributes, we find ſtrong and irrefragable arguments, why, in all our troubles and diſtreſſes, we ſhould put our whole truſt in him; and if we now turn our eyes upon ourſelves, and conſult our own experience of his former loving-kindneſs to us, we ſhall perceive abundant reaſon to continue the ſame affiance in him for the future. For, of the many calamities incident to human life, how many, through the goodneſs of God, have we eſcaped? How many, juſt hanging over our heads, and what we ſaw no poſſibility of avoiding, has his watchful providence averted from us? How many, after they had ſeized us, and began to preſs hard upon us, has he at firſt abated, and afterwards wholly removed? And how many, by his over-ruling power, have had ſo good an effect, that we have reaſon to rejoice for having been viſited by them? Have we never, by a painful and lingering ſickneſs, been brought to the very brink of the grave, and when medicines have failed, and phyſicians have pronounced our doom, by ſome unexpected turn, been reſtored to our health again? Has our good name never been aſperſed by ſome foul and baſe ſlanders, under which we have long lain, without being able to clear it, and has not God, by his good providence, [s] brought forth our righteouſneſs as the light, and our innocence as the noon-day? Have we never ſeen [t] poverty coming upon us as an armed man, when, on a ſudden, God has raiſed up unhoped-for benefactors to relieve us, or ſtruck out for us unforeſeen means of ſubſiſtence? Have we never known the wrath and malice of men ſet againſt us, when,

From our own experience.

q Pfal. xlvi. 2, 3. r Smalridge's Sermons. s Pfal. xxxvii. 6. t Prov. xxiv. 34.

without any offence of ours, they came gaping upon us, and [t] were ready to ſwallow us up quick, when God has either [u] reſtrained the fierceneſs of their wrath, or [x] covered us, as it were, under the ſhadow of his wings, until their tyranny has been over-paſt?

If then we have had any ſuch inſtances of God's goodneſs to us (as certainly we all of us have had, and unleſs we have been very careleſs obſervers of providence, muſt have taken notice of) from the ſenſe of paſt mercies to us we may draw this comfortable concluſion, that [y] he who hath delivered us from ſo great dangers, and doth deliver, in him we may ſafely truſt that he will yet deliver us: for his hand, which has ſo often been ſtretched forth for our help, is not ſince [z] ſhortened, that it can no longer ſave; neither is his ear, which has been ſo often opened to our prayers, grown heavy, that it can no more hear. Commit we but then our ſouls to him in well-doing, and the experience we have already had of his watchful care over us, will be our ſtanding conviction, that, in all circumſtances of danger or diſtreſs, he [a] will defend us under his wings; under his feathers we ſhall be ſafe; his faithfulneſs and truth ſhall be our ſhield and buckler.

Means to beget and improve this grace in us.

II. If then our truſt and reliance on God, [b] under all the pains of body and anxieties of mind, under all the frowns of fortune and difficulties of life which have befallen us, and all the apprehenſions of evils which we fear may befal us, be both our duty, and our remedy, it may be a matter well worth our inquiry, by what farther means and conſiderations we may beget and nouriſh in us this happy temper of mind: and in order to this,

1. The firſt thing we are to do, is to diveſt our minds of all preſumption and ſelf-confidence. [c] For when, without any regard to God's providence, men are bold enough to rely on themſelves and their own abilities, and vainly imagine, that, without the divine help and direction, by the contrivance of their own wit and diſcretion, they can compaſs their deſign, and make themſelves maſters of their utmoſt wiſh; it is no wonder that they ſhould ſo frequently miſcarry; and therefore truſt thou in the Lord (as the wiſe man adviſes) with all thine heart, and lean not on thine own underſtanding; in all thy way acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy paths; for [f] he that truſteth in his own heart, as he ſays in another place, is a fool. And a fool he is without all controverſy; for,

2. Considering the ſituation of human nature, [g] it is abſolutely neceſſary that there ſhould be ſomething for us to lean upon, and have recourſe to, as our proper ſupport and refuge. Every

[u] Pſal. cxxiv. 3. [t] Ibid. lxxvi. 10. [x] Ibid. lvii. 1. [y] 2 Cor. i. 10. [z] Iſa. lix. 1. [a] Pſal. xci. 4. [b] Smalridge's Sermons. [c] Barrow's Works, Vol. II. [e] Prov. iii. 5, 6. [f] Ibid. xxviii. 26. [g] Wilkins on Natural Religion.

Every man in his beſt eſtate is but a feeble and infirm creature: what from the impotence of his mind, and the diſorder of his paſſions within; what from the troubles and difficulties which he meets with from without; together with the mutability of all human affairs which cannot be aſcertained by all the imaginable foreſight which men are capable of, it is impoſſible for us to live independent. [h] Evils there are innumerable, from which, neither the wiſdom of the moſt prudent, nor the riches of the moſt wealthy, nor the forces of the moſt powerful, nor even the virtue of the moſt innocent can always ſecure us; and therefore faith, and hope, and truſt are altogether neceſſary in our preſent ſtate; and the man muſt be in a very unſafe and uneaſy condition, that is not provided with ſomething to ſupport and relieve him in his neceſſities. But now, if ſuch a ſupport be neceſſary, we can have it no where placed ſo commodiouſly as in the hands of Almighty God: [i] for where can we find a ſafer director of our affairs, than an all-comprehending wiſdom? Where a better protector againſt dangers and inſults, than omnipotent power? where a better provider of every thing that we want, than that goodneſs which is infinite?

SINCE then the neceſſity of truſting in ſomething, the folly of truſting in ourſelves, and the wiſdom of truſting in God is ſo apparent; theſe are conſiderations wherewith we ſhould frequently entertain our thoughts: and to give them a ſtronger impreſſion, we ſhould always bear in mind the promiſes that God hath made us of his readineſs both to guard us in danger, and to relieve us in want: [k] Becauſe thou haſt made the Lord, which is thy refuge, even the moſt High, thy habitation, there ſhall no evil befal thee, neither ſhall any plague come nigh thy dwelling; for he ſhall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways: they ſhall bear thee up in their hands, leſt thou ſhouldeſt daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone. This is our protection from danger, and our ſecurity from want are the comfortable words of our bleſſed Saviour. [l] Take no thought for your life, what you ſhall eat, or what you ſhall drink; neither for your body, what you ſhall put on: is not your life more than meat, and your body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air! for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them: are ye not much better than they? And why take ye thought for raiment? Conſider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they ſpin, and yet I ſay unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of theſe. Wherefore if God clothe the graſs of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is caſt into the oven, ſhall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, ſaying, What ſhall we

h Smalridge's Sermons. i Collier's Sermons. k Pſal. xci. 9, &c. l Matth. vi. 25, &c.

we eat? or, What shall we drink, or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and then all these things shall be added unto you.

5. Submission to God.

SUBMISSION to the will of God is of two kinds, the submission of obedience, which consists in a ready compliance with his commands in all things, and the submission of patience, which is nothing else but a quiet and chearful suffering of whatever afflictions he shall think fit to lay upon us; which is the duty we are here to enforce and recommend.

The nature of patience

[m] PATIENCE then is that virtue which qualifies us to bear all conditions, and all events, by God's disposal incident to us, with such apprehensions and persuasions of mind, with such dispositions and affections of heart, and with such external deportment and practice of life, as God and good reason require, viz. with a thorough persuasion that nothing befals us but either by the permission or direction of divine providence; a firm belief that all occurrences, however contrary to our desires, are both consistent with God's holy attributes, and conducive to our good; a full trust and dependence on him, either for strength to enable us to bear our afflictions, or for a seasonable removal or mitigation of them; abstaining from all discontented complaints and murmurings against providence; from all malicious and revengeful thoughts against the instruments of our sufferings; and from all unworthy and irregular courses, to extricate ourselves from them; that so [n] suffering according to the will of God, we may commit the keeping of our souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

IN these, and such-like acts, does the practice of this virtue consist; and the inducements we have to it arise, I. From the consideration of the nature of God, and our relation to him; and, II. From the benefits of virtue itself, and the advantages that accrue to us from our afflictions.

Its reasonableness.

I. IT is an observation made by Eliphas, in the book of Job, that [o] affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground, but are disposed and appointed by God, who has a sovereign right and dominion over us, and may therefore deal with us as he pleases, so long as he leaves us in a state preferable to non-existence. And from this consideration, the devout Psalmist, in all the calamities that befel him, was not [p] only dumb, and opened not his mouth, in any murmuring or complaint, because it was God's doings, but even carried his resolution to the highest pitch of resignation, [q] while I live,

m Barrow's Works, Vol. III. n 1 Pet. iv. 19. o Job v. 6. p Psal. xxxix. 9.
q Ibid. cxlvi. 2.

live, will I praise the Lord, yea, as long as I have any being, though deprived of every thing else, will I sing praises unto my God. He had the consideration before him of the numberless favours and benefits which from time to time God had extended to him, and if he so frequently received good at the hand of God, it was but equitable, he thought, that he should sometimes receive evil. [r] He considered the infinite wisdom of the supreme disposer of things, and implicitly believed, that there was an exact harmony in all his administrations, and that, at the last day, when [s] we shall behold his presence in righteousness, and the deep plot of this great and wonderful drama shall be laid open and revealed, every one should be satisfied with the beauty and just conduct of it, though to us, who sit now in a dark corner of the theatre, some of its parts seem very cloudy and perplexed. He called to remembrance his paternal relation, and knowing, that [t] like as a father pitieth his own children, so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him, he could not but perceive that the afflictions he laboured under, were necessary for the chastisement of his faults: he therefore reflected upon his own state and condition of life, [u] and perceiving, that as he was by nature God's servant, it was but decent for him to acquiesce in that rank and station which he had appointed him in his large family; that as he was a sinner, and less than the least of God's mercies, it was no more than his duty to be content and thankful for any thing on this side damnation. * We will bear the indignation of the Lord, says the afflicted church in the prophet Micah, because we have sinned against him; for [x] wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Since afflictions are the natural fruits of our voluntary miscarriages, it is reasonable that we should blame ourselves, rather than pick quarrels with providence about them: especially considering, that were we much more innocent than we are, this world is not a place of perfect pleasure and delight; that we came not hither to do our own will, or enjoy our own wishes, but are naturally [y] born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards, and need not therefore be surprised, if, in a vale of tears, we meet with such calamities and crosses as are suitable to our nature and condition; that no adversity, either in kind or degree, is peculiar to us, but if we take a view of other men, and compare our case with theirs, we shall find that we have many associates in misery, many far worse, and most as ill afflicted as ourselves: that it has all along been the lot of the best men, and greatest favourites of God, to be exercised in this manner; and that [z] the captain of our salvation, [a] a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, was himself made

[r] Norris's Discourses, Vol. II. [s] Psal. xvii. 15. [t] Ibid. ciii. 13. [u] Barrow's Works, Vol. III. * Micah vii. 9. [x] Lam. iii. 39. [y] Job v. 7. [z] Heb. ii. 10. [a] Isa. liii. 3.

made perfect through ſufferings. If therefore we either look upon God, as the author and diſpoſer of all our afflictions, or up on ourſelves, either as men, that are ſubject to them, or a ſinners, that do juſtly deſerve them, it muſt needs be great par tiality and perverſeneſs in us to be diſpleaſed that we are no exempted from bearing, either the wages of our iniquity, or th common burden of our nature: eſpecially, if we conſider,

Its benefits and advantages.

II. SOME of the advantages that do accrue to us from our afflic tions, as well as the great benefits of bearing them with pa tience. The maſters of Ethics, who have looked into the pro perties of the mind, are generally of this opinion, [b] that impa tience and diſcontent, under any kind of tribulation, proceed from a poorneſs of ſpirit; argue a man conſcious of his own weakneſs, and that he has not courage to reſiſt an evil; where as, had he but reſolution to face it, he would be ſo employed as to have no leiſure to complain; his blood would be ſo heated with the ſenſe of honour, and the hopes of victory, that the blows and ſmart of the encounter would ſcarce be felt. He, that in patience poſſeſſes his ſoul, is always eaſy and ſerene: his ſpirits do not riſe and fall with his circumſtances: the actual ſuffering of adverſity cannot deject him: he relies upon his in nocence, and his God: upon this foundation he ſtands fixed like a rock, and, though waves and ſtorms may paſs over him, yet he remains unſhaken, nor can all the ſhocks of adverſity ever deprive him of his principles, or his peace. He is perſuaded, that as God ſtands in no need of our happineſs, much leſs of our miſery, ſo [c] he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; and therefore, whenever he is compelled to do ſo, it is either for the correction of our failings, or the im provement and purification of our virtues, [d] that the trial of our faith, as the apoſtle has it, being much more precious than that of gold, which periſheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praiſe, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt. For this is another inducement to patience and reſignation under all conditions, that [e] our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things that are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen; for the things which are ſeen, are temporal, but the things which are not ſeen, are eternal. [f] And is there now any room for ſuch a paſſion as grief or diſcontent, after ſuch a conſideration as this? Can a man, acting upon this perſuaſion, be diſturbed at any accident, or be impatient in any condition of life? Can he murmur, or repine at the ſtrokes of God's afflicting hand, which he knows are given with a gracious intent, which are preſent interrup tions, but future enlargements of his happineſs, like the miſty vail

b Collier's Sermons. c Lam. iii 33. d 1 Pet. i. 7. e 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.
f Norris's Diſcourſes, Vol. II.

il of the morning, which for a while ſhuts in the rays of the n, but at length contributes to the greater luſtre and triumph the day? Shall not I then drink the cup, be the ingredients hat they will, which my heavenly Father has given? "My Father, who is too perfect to need my miſery, though, in reſpect of his ſupreme dominion, he might afflict me as he pleaſes; who is too wiſe to miſtake my true intereſt; and too good to preſcribe any draught, but what he knows is wholeſome for me; who has given me all the happineſs I enjoy, and parted with more, for my ſake, than he can poſſibly take from me in this world: has parted with his beloved Son for my redemption, and, in lieu of what he takes, has provided for me an inheritance incorruptible; and ſhall I then refuſe the cup, which ſuch a father as this has given?" No, ay the conſidering ſufferer ſay, I will [g] count it all joy, when I ll into divers temptations; I will reſt heartily ſatisfied with he ſevereſt diſpenſations; welcome the ſharpeſt arrow that omes from his quiver; and though he kill me, yet will I truſt n him.

6. Of inward Purity.

PURITY of heart, in the general notion of it, may be conſidered in a double ſenſe; [h] either in oppoſition to mixture, nd ſo it removes hypocriſy; or in oppoſition to pollution, and o it removes ſenſuality. In the former ſenſe, it denotes the mplicity and ſincerity; and, in the latter, the ſanctity and leanneſs of our thoughts and intentions: ſo that in the ſenſe herein we mean at preſent to take it, "the pure in heart are "ſuch, as, meaning to recommend themſelves chiefly to God's "acceptance, who ſearcheth the heart, regulate, not only the "external conduct of their lives, but alſo the inward frame and "habit of their minds, and conform, not only their actions, but "their wills and deſires, their thoughts and deſigns, to the "rule of the law, and to the dictates of the internal light of "God in their ſoul: ſuch as ſanctify the Lord God in their "hearts; compoſe the inmoſt receſſes of their minds into an "holy awe and reverence of the Divine Preſence; ſet a law "to all their intellectual powers, and ſuffer not the leaſt "thought or paſſion to violate the order, either of reaſon or "grace: ſuch, laſtly, as yield no conſent, either to the being "or ſtay of irregular motions; as delight themſelves with no "pleaſing recollections, no imaginary ſcenes of their paſt im-"moralities; but ſet themſelves at the greateſt diſtance from "ſin, reſiſt the very firſt beginnings, and, as near as they can, "abſtain from the leaſt appearance of evil."

Inward purity, what.

THIS

g James i. 2. h Norris's Diſcourſes, Vol. II.

THIS is the moſt reſembling idea we can frame to ourſelve of the pure in heart: and that it may not be taken for a mer idea, or a thing of notion rather than practice, we ſhall, I. Re preſent the neceſſity and happineſs of this diſpoſition of ſoul and then, II. Suggeſt ſome of the moſt probable means tha may be conducive to our attaining it.

The neceſſity of it from ſcripture.

I. [i] THE beſt of the heathen writers did not always reſolv the goodneſs of moral duties into a true principle: they argue indeed from the convenience, the utility, the beauty, and credi of it, but they ſeldom derived its origin from the ſpring-head or diſcovered that all its regular, its proper, and vital motion proceeded from the heart. Nay, the Jews themſelves ſeemed, i a great meaſure, to be ignorant of this doctrine; and their igno rance herein was the ground of a common error among them that concupiſcence, actual concupiſcence, had not formally th nature of ſin; and provided they performed the exterior act commanded by the law of Moſes, they were leſs ſollicitous wha became of the inward diſpoſitions of the mind. But our bleſſed Saviour has raiſed human virtue to its proper height, and his im proving expoſitions of the Moſaic law have taught and inſtructed us wherein the holineſs of a chriſtian muſt conſiſt. [k] Ye have heard that it has been ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery; but I ſay unto you, that whoſoever looketh upon a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. By luſting however here, as we ſaid [l] in another place, muſt not be underſtood the bare natural appetite of concupiſcence, which as ſuch is indifferent, but the irregular determination of it, always attended with the conſent of the will which conſent may either relate to the deſire itſelf, or to the acting of it: if to the act, then the man is, in all moral accounts, a complete adulterer, and will be ſo eſteemed by God, who as he ſees, ſo he judges by the heart, and will not think a man more innocent, only for wanting an opportunity of committing what he intended. But if the conſent be only to the deſire, then, though the man be not a complete adulterer, yet he may be truly ſaid, in the ſtile of the Pſalmiſt, to be [m] a partaker with the adulterer, to have entered within ſome degrees of unchaſtity, and to have tranſgreſſed againſt that chriſtian purity which for bids all conſent, not only to the complete acts, but alſo to the firſt motions of ſin.

AND indeed, the very genius and deſign of the chriſtian re ligion is, to deſtroy [n] corruption, eſpecially that which is in the world through luſt; to teach us to [o] crucify our affections, and inordinate deſires; and to [p] waſh, and ſanctify us in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God: for [q] this is the

i Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. k Matth. v. 27. l Vid. the Expoſition of the VIIth Commandment. m Pſal. l. 18. n 2 Pet. i. 4. o Gal. v. 24 p 1 Cor. vi. 11. q 1 Theſſ. iv. 3, &c.

the will of God, says the apostle, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication; that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; for God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. And as he has thus called us, so hath he given us reasons intirely new, and such as the world never knew before, to engage our practice of this duty: for [r] know ye not, says the same apostle, that your bodies are the members of Christ? Know ye not, that they are the temples of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, and which ye have of God? Know ye not, that ye are not your own, but are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which is God's? [s] Our bodies are not our own to use, or to abuse at pleasure, because our Saviour has actually purchased them to himself, by his death and sufferings for their redemption. They are the members of Christ, who, having thought fit to honour the whole human nature, body as well as soul, by his appearing in it, has taken us into so near a relation to him, as ought not to be abased to filthiness and pollution: and lastly, they are the temples of the Holy Ghost, dwelling in them, to direct and influence our minds, and therefore should not be employed in any thing unworthy his presence, or repugnant to his purity.

AND if the Spirit of God is to dwell in our minds, there is this necessity for their sanctification, [t] that however his first addresses, and influential visits may prevent all previous dispositions, yet his fixed and residential abode in us cannot be affected without an antecedent preparation of heart. And for this reason, I suppose it is, that though all men are, some time or other, partakers of the common and ordinary motions of the Spirit, yet none but very good men have the privilege to be the temples of his residence, which seems to be intimated to us, in that remarkable passage of the Revelation; [u] Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him: for by standing at the door and knocking, is meant common and preventing grace, and this indeed is used to all, without any previous qualifications; but he does not come in and sup, he does not take up his residence, and become a familiar guest, till his voice be heard, and the door opened, *i. e.* till the man has well attended to, and complied with those antecedent motions and suggestions.

GOOD reason therefore had our gracious Saviour to pronounce a blessing upon the pure in spirit, and to recommend this amiable disposition of mind, under no less a consideration, than that they shall see God. For having God always in their hearts, they cannot fail, even at present, of having a sensible perception of him: [*] they see him in his word, how good and reasonable Its blessedness here,

[r] 1 Cor. vi. 15, &c. [s] Gardiner's Sermons. [t] Norris's Discourses, Vol. II. [u] Rev. iii. 20. [*] Horneck's Sermons, Vol. I.

all his precepts are, how precious his promiſes, and how juſt his threatenings. They ſee him in his ordinances, what profit, what advantage he intends by them, how he deſigns them for channels to convey his grace, and Spirit, and influences to their ſoul. They ſee him in his works, how wonderful and powerful he is, with what rare art and contrivance he hath founded the earth upon nothing, and ſpread out the heavens like a curtain. They ſee him in his providence, how righteous, and holy, and regular he is, in managing the affairs, and adjuſting the great revolutions of the world. They ſee him in his mercies, how gracious, and condeſcenſive he is, how vigilant in his care, and how bountiful in his proviſion for them. They ſee him in their afflictions, how wiſe and kind he is in ſending them, and what love, and benefit, and edification he deſigns by them: they ſee him, in ſhort, in the knowledge and contemplation of his divine nature and perfections here; and, when their own nature comes to be ſpiritualized, ſhall live in his preſence, and have an immediate and perceptive ſight of him hereafter.

and hereafter.

x THAT inward and ſpiritual purity has a peculiar aptneſs in order to the viſion of God, we need not doubt, if we conſider that the only reaſon why we ſee not God now, is the groſsneſs of this tabernacle, wherein the ſoul is incaſed. This is that black ſkreen which parts the material from the intelligible world: and therefore the more abſtract we are from the body, and from the bodily life, the more fit we ſhall be both to behold, and to endure the rays of the divine light. We find, that even now, the purer and finer our blood and ſpirits are, the freer and clearer are our thoughts; the brighter and more tranſparent this glaſs is, the more the ideal light will dart in upon our ſouls: and in like manner hereafter, the purer the ſoul is, the purer will all its faculties and operations be; the leſs it retains of corporeal guſts and reliſhes, the more recollected and undivided will its powers be, and, conſequently, more ſtrong and vigorous upon the object where they fix. Nor will the ſoul itſelf only be prepared for the bliſsful viſion, but convey a fitneſs likewiſe to its reſurrection-body: for, though we muſt ſee through a glaſs then, as well as now, yet will the glaſs be clearer, according to the different purity of the ſoul, which, as we may obſerve even in this life, gives a particular brightneſs of air to the countenance, and makes the face to ſhine with an inimitable luſtre. Nor can we ſuppoſe but that God, who is ſo great a lover, will alſo be a liberal rewarder of inward purity, and, as he delights to dwell with ſouls of this complexion now, will reveal himſelf more plentifully, and make larger communications of his preſence, and emanations of his goodneſs to them hereafter.

* WHO

x Norris's Diſcourſes, Vol. I.

* WHO then ſhall aſcend unto the hill of the Lord, ſays the royal Pſalmiſt, and who ſhall ſtand up in his holy place? Even he that hath clean hands, and a pure heart: a pure heart is indeed the indiſpenſible condition of everlaſting happineſs; for without holineſs none ſhall ſee the Lord; and conſidering the cloſe and neceſſary connexion there is between purity of heart, and purity of life, it may not improperly be ſaid that it is the only condition requiſite. For if our heart be pure, our hands will be clean too, and if our heart be with God, all our actions, our whole ſervice, though otherwiſe very imperfect, will be graciouſly accepted, and rewarded by him.

II. How then ſhall we acquire to ourſelves this neceſſary, and ſo beneficial a virtue? And what endeavours ſhall we uſe, in order to cleanſe our hearts, and purify our minds? 1. x The firſt thing we are to do is, to attain right notions of God, and a ſtrong conviction of his omniſcience and inſpection; that y he is the ſearcher of all hearts, and the underſtander of our thoughts afar off; who z compaſſes our path, and our lying-down, and is acquainted with all our ways. And as he is the inſpector of our hearts, ſo he is of purer eyes than to behold vanity, and has that ſtrong averſion to ſin, that he will never abide in that breaſt, where a mad rabble of depraved appetites, and vicious imaginations have ſettled their abode: for a what agreement, as the apoſtle argues, hath the temple of God with idols? Now ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath ſaid, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people. b Suppoſing we were to receive ſome mighty prince, or perſon of great quality into our houſe, would we not make all things neat and clean, and take care that nothing be wanting that may give him content and ſatisfaction; that every chamber, every room in the houſe, be ſet out, and garniſhed, and adorned, as far as our ability reaches? But now what is the greateſt man, the greateſt potentate upon earth, to the King of kings, and Lord of lords; to a God, purer than angels, purer than the ſun and ſtars, dwelling in light inacceſſible, and by whoſe will and command the whole creation ſtands or falls? Since then this ſovereign Majeſty is willing to lodge, nay, to dwell in our ſouls, the conſideration cannot but ſtrike us, how holy, how pious, how chaſte, how pure our thoughts and affections ought to be, in order to give ſo magnificent a gueſt a ſuitable entertainment.

Means to attain it.

2. ANOTHER means to implant in our minds the grace of purity, will be frequently to contemplate the joys and felicities of the beatific viſion which God hath appointed for its reward. For if we are pleaſed with the ſight and converſation of an intimate friend, eſpecially after a long and tedious abſence, and think

* Pſal. xxiv. 3, 4. x Blackhall's Sermons, Vol. I. y 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.
z Pſal. cxxxix. 2, 3. a 2 Cor. vi. 16. b Horneck's Sermons, Vol. I.

think it a joyful thing to behold the face of a reconciled enemy; let us then consider what it will be for us to be admitted into the presence, and the bright reflections of that countenance which alone can speak peace and solid comfort to us. Nay, let us bear in mind the honour, and great privilege of being called up to serve the King of Glory, in his own court, and near his person; where we may for ever contemplate, even at the nearest view, his infinite majesty, power, wisdom, and goodness. Questionless, did we keep heaven constantly in our eye, and fix it upon our minds, what it is to see and converse with God, the reflection would naturally arise, that we ought to purify ourselves, even as he is pure. To which purpose it will be necessary,

3. To be earnest and importunate in our prayers, that he would not lead us into temptation, but keep us from such objects as are apt to kindle evil thoughts, and restrain the great enemy of souls from suggesting any: above all, [c] that he would send his blessed Spirit to our aid and assistance; to enlighten our understandings, to purify our affections, and to fix it indelibly upon our minds, [d] that to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7. Of Heavenly-mindedness.

Heavenly-mindedness, what.

THERE are two senses wherein the word Heaven may be taken, either for the state of another life in general; or for the particular glory and happiness of that state. In the former of these senses, [e] heavenly-mindedness implies our perpetual remembrance of our mortality; our having a constant prospect into the other world, which must be our final home, and stedfastly looking beyond the horizon of time to the long day of eternity; our dwelling, in short, on the meditation of the four last things, heaven, hell, death, and judgment; how great they are in their consequence, how certain in their event, and how near in their approach; and, in consideration of this, always waiting and preparing ourselves for this great and important change.

In the latter sense of the word, Heavenly-mindedness implies our contemplation of the infinite perfection of the divine essence, the first of beings, and the last of ends, and the inconceivable happiness of those who shall enjoy the communications of his blessedness. It is to meditate upon, and have always in view, that weight of glory, that incorruptible crown, with which the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared, no, not to be mentioned: to meditate day and night upon that happy time when we shall be partakers of Moses's wish, and admitted to that intimate and naked vision of that mysterious and incomprehensible excellence, which is too great for our mortal faculties,

[c] Blackhall's Sermons, Vol. I. [d] Rom. viii. 6. [e] Norris's Discourses, Vol. II.

culties, and which none can [f] see and live: to meditate upon he bleſſed ſociety of ſaints and angels, upon the delicious repaſts f anthems and hallelujahs, and that more raviſhing harmony of ivine love, and intellectual ſympathy; upon the elevated and iſed perfections of a glorified ſoul, the enlargement of its unerſtanding, the ſublimation of its will and affections, and upon he angelical clarity and divine temper of our reſurrection-body; n ſhort, upon all thoſe glorious things which are ſpoken of the ity of God, and upon the infinite conſolations of that joyful ſenence, Come ye bleſſed of my Father inherit the kingdom preared for you: and laſtly, it is to contemplate all this, not in a old and indifferent manner, as if it were a diſtant and precarious everſion, but as a ſtate that will ſhortly and certainly be, and herefore to be embraced with that faith and aſſurance, which [g] the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things ot ſeen.

ALL this the word may be ſaid to import; and therefore putting both of theſe ſenſes together, we ſhall, 1. Obſerve the reaſonableneſs of the duty; and, 2. Some of the chief benefits that ariſe from it.

I. WHAT worthy notions the wiſeſt of the heathen world (ſuch, I mean, as believed the immortality of the ſoul) had of a future ſtate; how delightful they repreſented the place, the company, the entertainments prepared for their reception after death, is what we had occaſion more than once, in the courſe of this work to obſerve. Upon theſe conſiderations the account we have of their philoſophers is, that they choſe to live abſtractly, and dwelt much upon the contemplation of what they were to be hereafter. The Epicureans indeed, who had no thoughts of a future exiſtence, made this their ſtanding maxim, Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die: and in this they acted conſiſtently enough; for, how vain and contemptible ſoever the world in itſelf may be, yet upon their hypotheſis, it was their greateſt prudence to make as much of it as they could, becauſe it was their all: but thoſe who had better conceptions of their rational part, and of its ſurviving the funeral of the body, had another way of reaſoning. They perceived that their ſoul in this ſtate was, as it were, out of its element, confined to a priſon of fleſh, and thence hindered from acting with that freedom and vivacity, which, upon ſome certain ſallies, they found was congenial to it. They perceived that our preſent ſtate of life, both by reaſon of its ſhortneſs, and the other vanities and vexations that attend it, was not conſiderable enough to juſtify the wiſdom and goodneſs of God in creating the world. They perceived that man, endued with ſuch large capacities, and impatient deſires of happineſs, which nothing on earth could ſatisfy, was a very poor and contemptible creature indeed, and the more ſo

Reaſonableneſs of it, from the light of nature.

f Exod. xxxiii. 20. g Heb. xi. 1.

ſo for being ſo highly exalted at preſent, if this was the only ſcene he was to act, and finally periſhed when he died. And from theſe obſervations they inferred, that this life was but a paſſage to the next, a ſhort voyage to an harbour of reſt; that heaven, in ſhort, was their home, and their native region, and in conſequence of this perſuaſion, what was their end and ſovereign happineſs, that they made the ſubject of their thoughts and deſires, and daily contemplations.

From revelation.

2. THIS was the reaſoning of the honeſt heathens, but the chriſtian religion has furniſhed us with arguments of a peculiar nature. St Paul, writing to the Philippians, propounds his own practice, as a pattern for their imitation; [h] Beloved, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk ſo, as ye have us for an enſample; for our converſation is in heaven, from whence alſo we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. [i] The word which we render Converſation ſignifies Citizenſhip, and alludes to a practice frequent among the Romans in particular, whereby, not only private perſons, but whole cities and provinces were admitted to certain rights and immunities peculiar to that commonwealth and conſtitution, though they were neither natives, nor inhabitants of the city of Rome. Theſe were ſometimes beſtowed freely, as a mark of friendſhip and favour; ſometimes purchaſed at a conſiderable price; ſometimes inherited by deſcent: but which way ſoever conveyed, the poſſeſſion of them was eſteemed a very valuable advantage: and, in alluſion to this, the apoſtle intimates, that chriſtians are denizens of heaven, and, though living now at ſome diſtance from thence, are nevertheleſs incorporated there; ruled by the ſame laws, and admitted to the ſame privileges, and therefore ought to live in the ſame manner with the bleſſed inhabitants of that city which is above.

WE cannot indeed, in all points, come up to their perfection, till we come to live in the ſame place where they do; but we are bound to aſpire at as great a reſemblance of them as our preſent condition will admit: as therefore they are happy beyond all imagination in the viſion and fruition of Almighty God, ſo ſhould we, by devout prayers, and pious meditations, approach and draw near unto him; contemplate the glory of his majeſty, the beauties of his works, the wiſdom of his providence, the wonders of his mercy and goodneſs, and that amazing inſtance and illuſtration of it, the redemption of loſt mankind by the death of his dear Son. As they are ſet above the vanities and changes of this world, by the preſent enjoyment of bliſs unchangeable and eternal; ſo ſhould the proſpect of that bliſs raiſe our hearts above the preſent world, inſpire a generous diſdain of all the unſincere pleaſures, and ſhort uncertain advantages here below; lighten our afflictions, moderate our paſſions, and reconcile

[h] Phil. iii. 17, 20. [i] Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels, Vol. III.

reconcile us to the apprehenſions and approaches of that diſſolu-
on, which, in death, lays the ſeeds of an endleſs immortality.
s they are freed from ſin, and ſhine in uninterrupted holineſs;
ſhould we conſider ourſelves, as perſons no longer under the
ower of a carnal principle, but animated by a divine Spirit to a
tional life, a life of temperance and chaſtity, of ſevere virtue
d exemplary piety, of activity and unwearied induſtry in doing
ood, and of ſuch habitual mortification of thoſe affections which
ove us to evil, that as with the bleſſed above they are not, ſo
ith us they may be, as though they were not.

3. ANOTHER argument, peculiarly Chriſtian, to engage our
ndeavours and aſpirations after heaven, is what St Paul makes uſe
to the Coloſſians; [k] if ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe
ings which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth on the right hand
God: ſet your affections on things above, and not on things
the earth: for ye are dead, dead to ſin and to the world,
d your life is hid with Chriſt in God; the force of which rea-
nings is plainly this,—That it becometh the diſciples to imitate
eir maſter, and the members to conform to the head, to con-
rm in a figurative, though they cannot in a literal ſenſe.
hough therefore, with Chriſt we cannot as yet looſen the
nds of death, and break through the priſon of the grave; yet
e can now riſe with him from the death of ſin, to newneſs of
fe, and by his reſurrection are not only enabled, but alſo admo-
ſhed ſo to do: and although, in his bodily aſcenſion we cannot,
he told St Peter, follow him now; yet we can, in ſome
enſe, aſcend with him by a proper elevation of our thoughts
nd affections, and from the contemplation of his aſcenſion are
yſtically invited ſo to do. [l] The aſcenſion of our Saviour, in
ort, as it is the pledge and pattern of ours, adds new ſupple-
ents of ſupport to our hopes of arriving at that bleſſed place,
hither he is gone before, and muſt needs therefore, at the
me time, fan the flame of our affections, and make them tend
pward: for with good reaſon therefore may the pious and de-
out ſoul now bear up herſelf upon the wings of contemplation,
ve, and deſire, and follow her aſcending Lord, where the eyes
the wondering apoſtles were forced to leave him, and in the
ords of Eliſha to his departing maſter, ſay, As the Lord liveth,
nd as my ſoul liveth, I will not leave thee; bleſſed and holy is
e that has part in this firſt aſcenſion; for on him the ſecond
eath ſhall have no power. Which leads us,

II. To obſerve ſome of the chief benefits that ariſe from our being poſſeſſed of this virtue; as it is the beſt expedient to beget and confirm in us a contempt of the world; to mitigate and aſſuage the evils of life; to give pleaſure and ſatisfaction to the mind here; and to fit and prepare the ſoul for happineſs hereafter. The benefits of heavenly-mindedneſs.

1. WE,

k Col. iii. 1, &c. l Norris's Diſcourſes, Vol. II.

1. We, who live on the face of the earth, may think it body of conſiderable magnitude, but, if we were to take a vie of it from one of the higher orbs, it would appear no greate than a point. Now, though this might be demonſtrated upo mathematical principles, yet, as every one is not capable of d ing that, ſuch an high and elevated proſpect would certain ſave us the trouble. The matter is the ſame in the caſe befo us. This world, conſidered alone, may carry perhaps with a ſpacious and goodly appearance, and he that conſiders it this light, will need reaſon and argument to convince him of vanity; but now it is but converſing a little in the other worl and taking a view of it from thence, and we ſhall find, tha without any more ado, it will ſhrink away almoſt into nothin From ſuch an elevated proſpect, all the pride and gaity of th earth would be but like the flutter of ſo many butterflies, and th buſineſs and hurry of life, like the toils of ſo many ants abo a little mole-hill.

2. And as the contemplation and deſire of heaven leſſe the good, ſo it leſſens the evil of the preſent life, and is an effe tual means both to wean us from the one, and ſupport us und the other. That wants and afflictions, diſeaſes and languiſhing ſorrow and decay are incumbrances upon mortality, from whi the brighteſt virtue, and moſt heavenly diſpoſitions are not e empted, is verified by daily experience; but then we miſtak the matter much, if we ſuppoſe the ſame calamities equall grievous to all. The ſenſe of theſe is unqueſtionably more leſs afflicting, as they find a man's mind more or leſs armed encounter them; and every impreſſion is proportionably tende as it wounds us in the part moſt ſenſible, and threatens the d ſtruction of that wherein we eſteem our happineſs to conſiſt from whence it follows, that to mind earthly things, in St Paul meaning, is to multiply ſorrows to ourſelves, by giving afflictio a power of making us miſerable; but that, to have our conve ſation in heaven, is the way to conſult our preſent eaſe, as we as our future happineſs. For while we look upon heaven our home and place of reſt, the inconveniencies upon our jou ney are eaſily diſpenſed with, and we learn to be content in o travels with the want of thoſe accommodations of which have plenty and abundance to welcome our arrival at our fix habitation; where, the more troubles we have paſſed throug the kinder uſage we ſhall find, and ſo either totally forget the or remember them with pleaſure, when [n] our light afflictio which was but for a moment, hath wrought for us a far mo exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

3. And as the deſire and contemplation of heaven and he venly things mitigates the afflictions of life; ſo, at one and t ſame time, it both furniſhes the ſoul with the greateſt pleaſu her

[n] 2 Cor. iv. 17.

here, and prepares it for the higheſt enjoyments hereafter. That intellectual pleaſures are greater than ſenſual, the ſenſualiſts themſelves will hardly deny: but now, of all intellectual pleaſures, to contemplate the infinite perfection of God, and the happineſs of thoſe bleſſed ſpirits that enjoy him, the order of angels, and that noble and bleſſed company of ſaints; to contemplate the laſt and richeſt ſcene of providence, and the diſcovery of all the reſt that went before, when the reaſon of all difficult and perplexing appearances ſhall be made plain, and the manifold wiſdom of God ſet in a clear light; to have our minds employed about the greateſt and beſt things; to walk with God, and keep a conſtant communion with him, muſt needs be the ſweeteſt, as well as the nobleſt entertainment, on this ſide heaven. But beſides the entertainment it gives to our minds, it preſents to our thoughts the nature and quality of the happineſs we are to enjoy above, viz. that it is a clear viſion, and ardent love of God, who cannot be ſeen by him that lives, much leſs by him that lives ill. And this cannot fail of putting us upon thinking, that an holy and divine frame of ſpirit is abſolutely requiſite, not only as a condition to our admiſſion into heaven, but ſuch a condition likewiſe to our enjoyment of it, that, without this diſpoſition, there is no being happy, even though we were in it. And from this conſideration, a man naturally paſſes, to fit himſelf for the enjoyment of his Maker, to purify himſelf, as he is pure, and to purge and ſpiritualize his nature, that ſo he may be qualified for the refined joys above.

[o] WITH what pleaſure then ſhould we think of theſe great and glorious things which God hath prepared for them that love him; [p] of that inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, which fadeth not away, reſerved for us in the heavens? How ſhould we welcome the thoughts of that happy hour, when we ſhall be removed from all the troubles and temptations of a wicked and ill-natured world; when we ſhall be paſt all ſtorms, and ſafely landed in the regions of bliſs and immortality? O bleſſed time! (may the good chriſtian ſay) when mortality ſhall be ſwallowed up of life, and we ſhall enter upon the poſſeſſion of that happineſs and glory which God hath promiſed, and our faith hath believed, and our hopes have raiſed us to the expectation of; when we ſhall be eaſed of all our pains, and reſolved of all our doubts, and purged from all our ſins, and freed from all our fears; made happy beyond our hopes, and have all that happineſs ſecured to us, beyond the power of time or chance: when we ſhall know God, and other things, without ſtudy; and love him, and one another, without meaſure; and ſerve and praiſe him without wearineſs; and obey him without reluctancy; and ſtill be more and more delighted in knowing, and loving, and praiſing, and obeying him, to all eternity. [q] Bleſſed is the man whom thou chuſeſt, O Lord, and receiveſt unto thee: he ſhall dwell in thy court, and ſhall be ſatisfied with the pleaſures of thy houſe, even of thy holy temple.

[o] Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol I. [p] 1 Pet. i. 4. [q] Pſal. lxv. 4.

SECT. I.

Of External Duties to GOD, and,

I. OF PRAYER.

Prayer, what.

PRAYER [r] is a solemn act of worshipping the supreme Being whereby we recognize his eternal power and Godhead whereby we acknowledge that he is the Creator and Governor of the world; that we absolutely, in every respect, depend on him; that every good and perfect gift cometh from him; and that, in all our exigencies, he is ready to hear, and able to relieve us. So that [s] the reason of our making our requests known unto God, is founded upon the belief of his infinite goodness, which disposes him to grant the petitions of his servants; of his unlimited power, which enables him to fulfil all their desires; and of his truth and veracity, which make it impossible for him not to keep the promises which he hath made of giving to those that ask. This is the duty: and, I. The grounds and reasonableness hereof; together, II. With the conditions requisite to make it an acceptable service to God, will be the scope of this discourse.

The grounds of it from our own nature

I. [t] IT has been the opinion of the best and wisest men of all ages, that the chief design of making man was, that there might be a being able to apprehend, and set forth the glory of God in these lower regions. For the creation seemed to be imperfect, and the glory which redounds to God from his works obscure, while there was no creature able to take notice of them. Man therefore, the last, best work of God, was formed to supply this want; and, as all other creatures were made for his use and entertainment, he himself was set apart for the service and worship of God. To this end he was endued with the angelic faculty of understanding, and the no less useful and noble instrument of speech, by which he was capable of clothing his thoughts with outward expressions, that, by his reason, he might apprehend, and by his voice, celebrate the divine perfections; and, as the priest of nature, offer up the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for the whole creation. And into what raptures of admiration, into what expressions of gratitude, may we suppose the first man to break forth when he awaked out of the dust into being, and beheld this goodly fabric of the world, and himself the greatest and happiest creature in it! Whence the order, whence the beauty, whence the variety of this blissful paradise around him; nay, whence himself? Such wonderful effects must necessarily raise him up to contemplate the first cause from whence they flowed, and we may piously presume, that

r Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. s Smalridge's Sermons. t Cote's Sermons.

hat the first time he opened his lips, was to shew forth his reator's praise.

THUS early did the duty of praise and thanksgiving to God egin, commanded by no laws, enforced by no motives, but hose of gratitude and inclination. For our first parents had no ants to be relieved, no grievances to be redressed; even their esires for future mercies were prevented, and all they could sk of God, in that blissful state, was only the continuance of it. ut when unhappily they fell from their innocence, and there- pon contracted guilt, and entailed misery upon their posterity, upplication and prayer became the necessary duty of mankind; nd so will continue, as long as we have infirmities to be healed, nd wants to be relieved, and sins to be pardoned, which will e, as long as we abide in this state of mortality. [u] Our de- endence upon God makes it necessary to sue to him for what e want, as well as to give him praise for what we have: our uilt, and liableness to his justice, prompt us to seek his favour y humble contrition for sin, and earnest desire of his pardon: ur infirmities and temptations shew us how absolutely needful is to be assisted by his grace, both to recover ourselves by true epentance, and to persevere in doing the thing that he requires: nd lastly, the common ties of humanity, and the religion of harity oblige us to pray for one another, as well as for our- elves: so that natural light discovers this duty, and shews it hrough all the ways of invocation, or calling upon God.

AND accordingly, if we look into the heathen world, we shall ind, that no nation was ever yet so rude and barbarous, as not ave some form of religious worship; and that, however the ulgar might differ in the object of their adoration, the wisest n most nations were generally of the Roman orator's opinion; [x] "That the nature of God may justly challenge the worship " of men, because of its superlative excellence, blessedness, and " eternity; and that, whoever doubts or denies this (as [x] Ari- " stotle asserts) ought not to be dealt with by arguments, but " by punishments." Their acknowledgment therefore was, that all their actions should begin with the gods, and that a blessing could not be derived upon them without imploring their aid; nay, [z] that the sacrifices were not duly offered, nor the gods rightly worshipped, without prayer. The Stoics indeed, who imputed so much to their own strength, seemed [a] to ex- clude the divine assistance, and, in consequence of that, to shut out prayer; but we find them frequently retracting this opi- nion, and teaching their disciples, that [b] as no man can be good without

From uni- versal practice.

u Clagget's Sermons, Vol. II. [x] Nat. Deor. L. I. [y] Topic. i. 9. [z] A Diis immortalibus nobis agendi capienda primordia, CIC. de Leg. L. II. Bene ac sapienter majores instituerunt, ut rerum agendarum ita dicendi initium a precationibus capere, quod nihil rite nihilque providenter homines sine Deorum immortalium ope consilio honore auspicarentur. PLIN. Paneg. [a] Plin. Nat. Hist. L. XXVIII. c. ii. [b] Quam stultum est optare, cum possis a te impetrare? Non sunt ad Cœlum elevandæ manus. SEN. Epist. 41. [b] Vir bonus sine Deo nemo est. Ibid.

without God, ſo their buſineſs was, [c] to pray for health of mind and body, but more eſpecially for the former. And indeed whatever ſome profligate people may pretend, and, in the height of their jollity, ſay to themſelves, Who is the Almighty, that we ſhould fear, and call upon him? There are ſome certain intervals, viz. when anguiſh and diſtreſs come upon them, and all human means of relief and ſupport fail, that they will naturally cry unto God, and endeavour to take ſanctuary in his all-ſufficiency: inſomuch that it may juſtly be queſtioned, whether ever there was a ſinner ſo wicked and obdurate, who, in the laſt efforts of life (could we but ſee what paſſed within) was able to overcome all ſecret prayer, and motion of the ſoul towards God.

The reaſonableneſs of it.

AND indeed, if we conſider the matter rightly, what can we ſuppoſe more reaſonable than that the ſovereign Lord of all the world ſhould be acknowledged by us? [d] That we, who do continually depend upon him, ſhould, ever and anon, be looking up to him, and expreſſing that dependence? For is it not fit that we, who every moment experience a thouſand inſtances of his kindneſs, partake of a thouſand mercies and favours from his hand, and muſt periſh the next minute, unleſs they be continued to us; is it not highly fit and reaſonable, I ſay, that we ſhould take notice of theſe things to our bounteous benefactor? We ſhould think it very ill manners to paſs by our prince, or even any of our betters, without ſaluting them, or, ſome way or other, teſtifying our reſpect to them, though they had no way particularly obliged us; but if we were beholden to them for our daily bread, to come into their preſence without taking notice of them, or their bounty to us, would be intolerable: how much more intolerable therefore muſt it be to paſs by the Almighty, day after day, nay, to be in his preſence continually (as indeed we always are) and yet neither pay any homage and reverence to him, as he is our ſupreme Lord, nor any acknowledgments, as he is our daily preſerver? Eſpecially conſidering, that this is one of the moſt delightful and honourable employments that our natures are capable of.

The pleaſure and honour of it.

VICIOUS men perhaps may have other conceptions, but as they have no experience of devotion, they are not competent judges; thoſe only who have a good ſenſe and reliſh of God upon their minds, and have uſed and accuſtomed themſelves to ſpiritual exerciſes, can form right notions of it: and to ſuch we appeal, whether the delights, and ſatisfaction and conſolation they receive from converſing with God, and an hearty pouring out of their ſouls unto him, be not inexpreſſible? Whether they do not find more joy, and peace, and comfort, in their attendance upon God's ſervice, either in public or private, than ever they did from the pleaſure and gratifications of any of their

[c] Roga bonam mentem, bonam valetudinem animi deinde corporis. Epiſt. 10.
[d] Sharp's Sermons, Vol. I.

their outward senses. As much as the soul is more pure and excellent than the body, so much are the pleasures and gratifications of that, more exquisitely delicious than those, which arise from corporeal objects: but of all the pleasures of the soul, those that it receives from the communications of God, in the exercise of devotion, are incomparably the highest and most affecting; insomuch that, however we talk of pleasures and enjoyments, we may truly affirm that no man ever found them until he became acquainted with God; until he was made sensible of his love, partaker of his favours, and lived in an intire friendship and communion with him, which is chiefly, if not only expressed and maintained by prayer, and other exercises of devotion.

WE account it, and that very justly, a mighty privilege and dignity to be known to princes and great men; to have their ear, and enjoy the liberty of access to them at all times: but what is this to the honour and dignity we receive, in having leave given us, at all times, to come into the presence of the great King of the universe, whose power and goodness are infinite? That we, poor sinful dust and ashes, should be permitted to speak to so transcendent a majesty! Nay, should have free liberty given us to converse with him, as with a friend! To open all our wants, to acquaint him with all our concernments, to make known every thought of our hearts, and every affair of our lives to him! Nay, and to be assured that he will be so far from taking amiss this boldness in us, that he will favourably accept all our applications, and make us as kind returns as we ourselves can wish or desire! What greater honour are we capable of than this? And how far are we sunk below all the ambition of human nature, when we will not take all opportunities of thus honouring and doing credit to ourselves, in making our addresses to God? Especially considering farther, the many great benefits and advantages that accrue to us hereby.

The benefits and advantages of it.

OF what singular efficacy the due performance of this duty is, to procure all temporal blessings, and avert all temporal judgments, we are instructed in Solomon's prayer, at the dedication of the temple: [e] If thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy; if heaven be shut up, and there be no rain; if there be in the land famine and pestilence; or if thy people go out to battle against their enemy; then, if they pray towards this place, and confess thy name, hear thou their prayer and supplication in heaven thy dwelling-place, deliver them from their affliction, and maintain their cause. So that, according to the wise man's account, if wars infect a nation, prayer is the surest procurer of peace or victory; if death or famine rage in a land, this restores plenty and abundance; if the heavens be as brass, and the earth as iron, this dissolves them, and makes them

[e] 1 Kings viii. 33, &c.

them relent into ſhowers and fatneſs; if the peſtilence reigns i the ſtreets, this holy breathing can purge the air, and diſpel a noxious vapours: in fine, whatever calamities, whether privat or public, our ſins have drawn down upon us, a devout perfor mance of this duty is able to remove them, and to ſecure th bleſſing of God, both upon our perſons and our labours, upon ou baſket and ſtore, upon our families, upon our employments, an upon all that we either have or do. Nay, ſuch is the virtue o prayer, that it makes every thing we have a bleſſing of God and all the actions of our natural or civil life, however indiffe rent in themſelves, turn into acts of religion.

To mention but one benefit more, which naturally ariſes fro a conſcientious practice of this duty. [f] As in prayer, we ſet ou wants and infirmities continually before us; we ſolemnly plac ourſelves in the preſence of God, and call on him who ſees a our actions; we enter into certain purpoſes and reſolves againſ ſin: ſettle our minds into ſerioufneſs and deliberation; abſtrac them from ſecular and worldly affairs, and, by frequent con verſing with God, are changed (gradually and inſenſibly chang ed) into his image and ſimilitude; ſo it cannot be doubted bu that this exerciſe muſt needs be highly ſubſervient to the pur poſes of holineſs, as it produces humility and heavenly-minded neſs in us, care and vigilance in our conduct, a reverential fea of God in our minds, and a reſemblance of the divine perfection in our nature. Nay, ſo very conducive is this one duty toward a life of godlineſs, that we may venture to lay down theſe thre things for undoubted truths. 1. [g] That it is impoſſible for an man to be good that lives without conſtant prayer. 2. Tha whoſoever is good at preſent, if he diſuſes himſelf to this duty will not continue good long. And, 3. That whoever makes conſcience of praying frequently and heartily, and continues ſo to do, though he cannot at preſent be ſaid to be a good man, yet it is impoſſible for him long to continue bad. He will cer tainly at laſt get the victory over his luſts and ill habits; ſince his praying, as one expreſſes it, will either make him leave ſin ning, or ſinning make him leave praying.

An objection againſt it.

" But if God [i] be ſo omniſcient a Being, as to know what " we ſtand in need of without our telling him, or where w " are preſſed, without our complaining; what reaſon is there " for our acquainting him with our wants or calamities? And, " if he be an infinitely good and kind Being, more ready to " give than we are to aſk or receive, what occaſion for urging " and ſolliciting him to do what his own eſſential goodneſs will " prompt him to do for us, without our aſking? Eſpecially " conſidering, [k] that he is an unchangeable Being, the ſame " yeſterday, to-day, and for ever; the ſame not only in his " nature

[f] Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. [g] Sharp's Sermons, Vol. I.
[h] Blackhall's Sermons, Vol. I. [i] Ibid. Vol. II. [k] Smalridge's Sermons.

nature and eſſence, but alſo in his counſels and purpoſes. What he hath once reſolved, he ſteadily executes; and is not therefore to be moved by the prayers and ſupplications of clamorous and importunate petitioners." Now in anſwer to all this, it may be obſerved, that though the knowledge of God be ſuch, that he cannot but be ſenſible of all our wants and diſtreſſes, nor can we tell him any thing that he did not know before; yet it is but fit and reaſonable, that, as we are really in want, we ſhould own our wants to him; that, as we are really dependent upon him, we ſhould acknowledge that dependence; acknowledge, I ſay, that we are indigent and impotent creatures; that we need many things, and what things they are that we need; that we cannot ſupply our own wants, and that God alone is able to ſupply them. All this, I ſay, God knows as well, nay much better than we do: but nevertheleſs it is but fit and becoming us that we ſhould profeſs and own what we know to be true, and freely declare the ſenſe of our own weakneſs, and his all-ſufficiency. In like manner, though the goodneſs of God be infinite, ſo that we can ſet no bounds to it, yet may it be truly ſaid to be limited by his own wiſdom and juſtice; and therefore, ſhould he be ſo indulgent as to give us every thing we wanted without aſking, however this might magnify his fondneſs, it would not ſo well affect his wiſdom; ſince hereby we might forget our dependence on him, and impute his bleſſings either to fortuitous events, or the natural courſe of things. Whereas now, when good things are, in a great meaſure, with-held from men, till they pray for them, and are made the conſequence, as it were, of their petitions; by this they perceive, from whoſe hand every good and perfect gift cometh; and by this they are convinced, how highly it concerns them to endeavour to procure his favour and good-will. And ſo again, [l] though the purpoſes of God be unchangeable, yet are they not ſo abſolute, as to exclude all conditions. He determines to ſupply the wants of his creatures, but then they muſt be ſuch as are qualified to receive ſuch ſupply. Now, among the qualifications which he requires in thoſe whoſe wants he is determined to ſupply, the very chief of all is our dependence upon him, and an intire confidence in his goodneſs and bounty; and the proper expreſſion of his truſt and dependence is our looking up unto God, from whom cometh our help. Anſwered.

THERE is indeed a temper in men that affects to be courted and flattered, and fawned upon, and complies with the requeſts of others out of mean and little ends: but this is the effect of pride, and paſſion, and intereſt, much different from theſe condeſcenſions of Almighty God, who, though he cannot be ſubject either to weakneſs or corruption, may yet be prevailed upon by ſuch methods as become a reaſonable, and wiſe, and generous mind. And therefore, when men pay the homage due to his infinite

l Smalridge's Sermons. m Stanhope's Occaſional Sermons.

infinite majeſty, when they throw themſelves intirely upon
goodneſs, caſt all their care upon him, commit their ſouls, a
all their concerns into his hands, and that with ſuch devout a
ſtrong perſuaſions of his being a faithful Creator, that no dela
no refuſals can tempt them to ſuſpect or diſtruſt him; this
ſuch an inducement to help and favour people in diſtreſs,
every great ſpirit, every man of honour and common good n
ture would think it a fault not to comply with. So that, f
God to ſhew himſelf flexible, upon ſuch occaſions, is not a thi
chargeable with fickleneſs or inconſtancy, but rather a gracio
compliance, upon juſt and reaſonable motives; and to harde
himſelf againſt the cries and complaints of ſuitors thus qualifie
would much leſs become the character of the ſovereign judg
and infinitely good ruler of the world. [n] It is a groſs conce
tion therefore to imagine that our prayers are troubleſome
him, as the requeſts of importunate beggars are to us: for thoug
ſuch people as ſay nothing of their poverty, may be more pr
per objects of our charity, than noiſy and clamorous ſuitors ar
yet it is certainly juſt in God to overlook the neceſſities of tho
who are above aſking a ſupply, and to grant the requeſts
thoſe only, who, with full aſſurance of hope, fly unto him f
help in the time of need; ſince this is the language of t
ſcripture: [o] The Lord is nigh unto all them, and them onl
that call upon him; he will fulfil the deſire of them that fe
him; he alſo will hear their cry, and will ſave them. Whi
leads us to conſider,

The requiſites of prayer.

II. THE conditions requiſite to make our prayers an accep
able ſacrifice to God. That an inward and true ſenſe of pie
is abſolutely neceſſary to recommend our prayers to God,
an evident principle of natural religion; for [p] this we know
that God heareth not ſinners, but if any man be a worſhippe
of God, and doth his will, him he heareth; for which reaſo
the apoſtle aſſures us, [q] that if our heart condemn us not, the
have we confidence towards God, not only a general confiden
in his favour, and the good diſpoſitions of his providence to
wards us, but in his particular goodneſs, when we addreſs ou
ſelves to him by prayer; for ſo it follows in the next word
and whatſoever we aſk, we receive of him, becauſe we keep h
commandments, and do thoſe things which are pleaſing in h
ſight. That purity of intention, which is neceſſary to the pe
fection of all other chriſtian duties, is much more neceſſary an
indiſpenſible in this of prayer is apparent from hence; th
though this alone cannot render our prayers acceptable to Go
yet we are aſſured that without it they will be unavailable
and therefore the apoſtle acquaints us, that as there are ſom
who have not, becauſe they aſk not; ſo there are others wh
r a

n Smalridge's Sermons. o Pſal. cxlv. 18, 19. p John ix. 31. q 1 Joh
iii. 21, 22.

ask and receive not, because they ask amiss, that they may consume, what they hope to receive, upon their lusts.

If ever therefore we desire that our prayers and addresses should enter heaven, and find admittance to the throne of grace, we must be careful neither to regard iniquity in our hearts, nor any indirect end in our intentions. Our mind, wherewith we pray, must first of all be such as God delights in; our end, for which we pray, must be such as he approves; and then the manner, in which we pray, must be such as he directs; [r] which, according to the best instructions that we have, must be, 1. With firm trust in him to whom we pray. 2. Serious attention of mind whilst we pray. 3. A fervent desire of what we pray for. 4. Humility in the act of praying. And, 5. Perseverance in our performance of it. The trust wherewith we offer up our prayers must bear proportion to the sure promises of God, on which it is to be built; our attention to the weight and importance of that religious duty about which we are employed; our fervency to the earnestness of those wants under which we labour; our humility to the glory and majesty of that Being to whom our prayers are addressed; and our perseverance to the inestimable value of those blessings which we promise ourselves at last.

1. THE majesty of God indeed, upon our first reflection, is more apt to strike awe and terror into our souls, than to give us any trust and confidence in our approaches to him. If we take a view of our own meanness, and his glory; of our own sinfulness, and his purity; and go about to measure the immense distance there is between him and his creature; and if possible, the still more immense distance between a sinful creature and that immaculate Being who hateth all iniquity; it will seem presumption enough to pray unto him, without adding to it the yet greater confidence of hoping, of trusting, that the prayers of such impotent, such mean, such wretched supplicants shall work upon so powerful, so sublime, so awful a majesty. But when our approaches to him are in obedience to his command; when our hopes are built upon his sure mercies; when our confidence is supported by his express promises; we cannot withdraw ourselves from his presence without violation of his authority; we cannot despair of acceptance without derogation to his goodness; we cannot doubt of success without distrust of his veracity. Whatever arguments therefore can be offered to weaken our faith, or stagger our hopes, or shake our confidence, are all answered by this gracious promise of our Saviour, I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them; [t] for be the things we desire never so great, they are not without the compass of his omnipotence to grant; be they never so disproportioned

Trust in God.

[r] James iv. 3. [s] Smalridge's Sermons. [t] Mark xi. 24.

portioned to our deſerts, they do not ſurpaſs the bounds of hi merits.

Attention of mind.

2. ATTENTION of mind is another qualification of an accept able prayer; and a qualification it is not ſo eaſy to be attaine as we may imagine. If we conſider the make and frame of ou ſouls, and attend a little to what paſſes within us, we find tha there is a certain train of thoughts which are conſtantly on flo in our minds, ſome going, and others quickly ſucceeding in thei room; ſo that, when we take moſt care to keep our thought from roving, we find it not eaſy to ſettle and fix what, in its ow nature, is ſo wandering and volatile. God therefore, who ex pects that we ſhould ſerve him, in proportion only to the ſtrengt of thoſe faculties wherewith he hath endued us, will no doub graciouſly pardon our unavoidable infirmities, our unvoluntar wanderings, and the ungovernable diſtractions of our thoughts But though God's mercy will certainly acquit us from the im putation of guilt for ſuch defects, as from the infirmity of ou natures are unavoidable; yet it will in no caſe clear us in re ſpect of thoſe wanderings of thought which are affected an voluntary. [u] When, through the power of our luſts, or th cares of the world, our minds are ſo totally immerſed in ſenſu and carnal things, that we cannot call them off to ſpiritu and religious duties; when, for want of due care and attention we ſet our thoughts adrift, as it were, and ſuffer them, witho check or controul, to wander at random; when, before ou entry upon this ſolemn duty, we neither prepare ourſelves fo it by imprinting on our ſouls venerable and awful notions o the tranſcendent majeſty of that ſupreme Being to whom w approach; nor, during our religious exerciſe, retain a livel ſenſe of the exceeding glory of that God before whom w ſtand; when the words, in ſhort, we pour forth, are va empty ſounds, unaccompanied with any inward conceptio anſwering to them; ſuch wandering and diſtracted prayers theſe are ſo far from being a * reaſonable ſervice, which alo is acceptable unto God, that the royal Preacher calls them th Sacrifice of Fools, and thereupon ſubjoins this good advice Keep thy foot, *i. e.* thy thoughts and affections, [x] when tho goeſt into the houſe of God: be not raſh with thy mouth, an let not thine heart be haſty to utter any thing before God; fo God is in heaven, and thou upon earth.

Fervency.

THE apoſtle, in the telling us that [y] the effectual fervent pray of a righteous man availeth much, does not only ſuppoſe an in tenſe devotion in prayer to be a duty, but a means likewiſe t recommend it more effectually to the favour and acceptance God. Real want, where there is a quick ſenſe of it, will find way of expreſſing itſelf in ſuch a manner as to excite pity; an therefore, if we are thoroughly conſcious to ourſelves of ou ow

u Smalridge's Sermons. * Rom. xii. 1. x Eccleſ. v. 1, 2. y James v. 1

own indigence, of our utter inability to ſupply our preſſing wants, and our neceſſary dependence on God, who alone can ſupply them, this deep ſenſe of our neceſſities will make us warm and vehement for relief. [z] As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo David's ſoul panted after God; his ſoul thirſted for God; his fleſh longed for him in a dry and thirſty land; his ſoul longed, yea, even fainted for the courts of the Lord. The panting of an hart wearied, purſued, and ſpent, the drought of parched and gaping land, the cravings of hunger and thirſt, and the faintings and longings of a woman with child, are proper and lively images of an eager and affectionate concern for thoſe bleſſings which the holy Pſalmiſt thus earneſtly deſired. This is the life and true ſpirit of devotion which aſcends up, and takes heaven, as it were, by violence: and for this reaſon very likely our prayers are called in ſcripture a Sacrifice, and Incenſe, becauſe they become acceptable, by the ſelf-ſame methods that thoſe were uſed to be of old. It is burning that creates the ſweet-ſmelling ſavour; and it muſt be the earneſtneſs and warmth of our prayers that alone can make them come up as incenſe before the throne of God.

4. ANOTHER property neceſſary and eſſential to give ſucceſs and efficacy to our prayers, is humility, which ariſes from the nature of the duty itſelf: for ſince, by prayer, we acknowledge ourſelves to be indigent and dependent creatures; want, one would think, is a ſure remedy againſt pride, as dependence is a motive to be humble. [a] Acceſs indeed we have, and are commanded to come with boldneſs to the throne of grace; but it ſhould always be remembered, that it is a throne of grace, becauſe the ſeat of judgment, not any of us is able to ſtand before; that mercy is the only thing we can pretend to, and that even this is, in no degree, due to us for our own ſakes, but purely upon the account of another, who purchaſed it for us at the price of his own blood; that therefore, if we obtain our petitions, this is an exceſs of bounty; but if we wait long, or be denied, God is maſter of his favours, and may do what he will with his own. So that every thing that may conduce to the laying us low in our thoughts, every thing that may help to ſpeak our modeſty, and reverence, and ſubmiſſion, is all little enough for creatures ſo deſpicable by nature, and by ſin, ſo deteſtible as we, ſuing for bleſſings that they deſerve not, and for mercies that they have no right to. Humility.

5. ONE condition more of the final ſucceſs and validity of our prayers is patience and perſeverance: for though God, for the trial of our faith, and the improvement of our humility, for the manifeſtation of our truſt in him, and ſubmiſſion to his will for the increaſe of the value of his bleſſings, and the clearer demonſtration of our intire dependence of his goodneſs and bounty, Perſeverance.

z Pſal. xlii. 1, 2. a Stanhope's Occaſional Sermons.

bounty, may think it proper ſometimes to delay the anſwer to our prayers; yet muſt we not, upon that account, deſpair of the acceptance of our renewed addreſſes. The relenting of the unjuſt judge ſtands upon record [d] in ſcripture as a plain inſtance of the irreſiſtible force of perſeverance in prayer. He neither feared God, nor regarded man; and yet, becauſe this widow troubleth me, ſaith he, I will avenge her, leſt, by her continual coming, ſhe weary me. Now though it were blaſphemy to think that God acts upon the ſame motives with this unjuſt judge; yet this we may learn from the nature of the parable, that if a man, who neither fears God, nor regards men, who hath neither any ſenſe of religion or humanity, may be ſuppoſed to be ſo far prevailed upon by the earneſt prayer of a miſerable neceſſitous perſon as to grant the requeſt made to him, and to adminiſter relief to the ſupplicant, merely upon the account of the continuance and importunity of the petitions that are put up: how much more ought we to think that God, who is infinite goodneſs itſelf; who is always kind and bountiful to his creatures; who delights to do them good, even without their deſiring it; and who is able to do them good with much leſs pains than they requeſt it: how much more ought we to think, I ſay, that this God, upon our earneſt and hearty prayers to him for any thing we ſtand in need of, will return us a kind anſwer, and grant us ſuch ſupplies as are proper for us? But then we are to remember that we pray always, and faint not; that we be diligent, importunate, and perſevering in our devotions; otherwiſe, we are not to expect any more favourable return of them, than the judge, in the parable, made to the widow, upon her firſt or ſecond application to him.

THESE are ſome of the chief qualifications that give wings to our prayers, and ſtrength to our addreſſes: and that they may never fail of a kind acceptance, we muſt be mindful at all times to offer them up in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Having therefore not only a gracious God, who heareth prayers, when offered up in a due and regular manner, but a merciful Redeemer likewiſe, [f] through whom we have acceſs to the Father; [g] let us draw near with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith, having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience: and praying always with all [h] prayer and ſupplication in the ſpirit, let us watch thereunto with all perſeverance.

2. Of public and private Prayer.

Different kinds of prayer.

IF [i] we conſider the matter of prayer, we may diſtinguiſh it into prayer for ſpiritual, and prayer for temporal good things; or into prayer for ourſelves, and interceſſion for others: if

d Luke xviii. 2, &c. e Sharp's Sermons. f Eph. ii. 18. g Heb. x. 22.
h Eph. vi. 18. i Blackhall's Sermons, Vol. II.

we conſider the manner of prayer, we may diſtinguiſh it into ntal, which is, when we pray only with our hearts, without tering or expreſſing any words; and vocal, which is, when expreſs in words, and utter with our mouths the deſires of r hearts: but the only diſtinction that we ſhall at preſent iſt on is that of public prayer, which is, when we join with hers in putting up our common petitions; and ſecret prayer, hen retired from all company, we put up our private petitions God; and theſe, though for matter and ſubſtance the ſame, are t two diſtinct duties, and both neceſſary to be performed as caſion calls for them.

THE church is God's houſe, the place on earth of his imme- Public and private, and their reſpective advantages.
ate reſidence, and he hath promiſed, that [k] when two or three e met together in his name, he himſelf will be in the midſt of em: in the cloſet however we do not ſhut ourſelves up from s all-ſeeing eye; ſince our Saviour hath aſſured us that [l] if e pray in ſecret, our Father, which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall re- ard us openly. [m] The fitteſt place to acknowledge public ercies, and implore the common bleſſings of life, is in public, here the united prayers of a congregation are ſuppoſed to be ore prevalent with heaven than ſingle petitions: but there e ſome favours we want, which it does not become us there ask; ſome wounds to be healed, which are not to be expoſed public view, but common decency requires that particular counts be adjuſted betwixt God and our ſouls in private: nor n we ever properly deſcend into ourſelves, to know the true ate of our ſouls, but when we [n] commune with our hearts in ur chamber, and are ſtill. In the church, general mercies are plored, and general bleſſings acknowledged; but then there no confeſſing our guilt in all its circumſtances, or affecting our uls there with that holy grief which can only work a thorough epentance: whereas, in the cloſet, we are at liberty to indulge urſelves in all the expreſſions of ſorrow; and the pious ſoul ay let itſelf looſe to all the fervours of devotion, which, at the ltar, is ſo far from being praiſe-worthy, that it is highly blame- ble and indecent: for every thing that is ſingular in public, every hing that draws the eyes and obſervation of others upon us, avours of hypocriſy and oſtentation, and is forbidden by our Saviour's command [o] of not performing any duty, that we may e ſeen of men. But when we are under the inſpection of no ye but that of God, who ſpies out all our ways, and under- ands our thoughts long before they are formed, the more ervent our devotions are, the more acceptable they are to him, ecauſe there can be no reaſon to ſuſpect the ſincerity of them: or we can never entertain ſuch unworthy notions of God, as o imagine that we can, by any artifice, deceive him, and make him

[k] Matth. xviii. 20. [l] Ibid. vi. 6. [m] Cotes's Sermons. [n] Pſal. iv. 4.
[o] Matth. vi. 5.

him believe that we honour him with our lips, when we know ourſelves that our hearts are far from him. So that, though by a falſe zeal and pretended ſanctity in public, we may prevail upon others to have a better opinion of us than we really deſerve; yet there is no fear but that we ſhall act ſincerely when we addreſs ourſelves in private to God; and then our zeal cannot be too high, nor our devotions too much inflamed, ſo long as they proceed from ſincerity, and are equally tempered with fervour and humility.

THERE is this farther advantage of retirement, that it is of ſingular uſe to fix our attention, which, by the variety of the objects we meet with in public, is often broke and divided; and that we are leſs ſubject to ſpiritual languors, when we are at liberty to make uſe of our own thoughts and expreſſions, to leave off when our attention flags, and return to it again, at a more favourable opportunity: but then we want in the cloſet that awful reverence, that ſolemnity of devotion, with which the church inſpires us. There the beauty of holineſs appears in its brighteſt luſtre, charms the eyes and inflames the hearts of all beholders. For what a decent, what an agreeable, what a raviſhing ſight is a well-ordered congregation, offering up their prayers, with one conſent, and with one voice, to their great Creator; laying aſide all diſtinctions of rich and poor, mean and noble, and reſolving all their differences into a pious emulation of excelling each other in the love of God, and zeal for his ſervice? Certainly, if we could form to ourſelves any fair image or repreſentation of heaven here on earth, we muſt draw the model of it, though in an infinite lower degree, from the uniformity and order, the reverence and devotion of religious aſſemblies; which, beſides their reſemblance, have ſo neceſſary a dependence on the other, that, to frequent the ſervice of the ſanctuary, to join in the religious exerciſes of the church militant on earth, is the beſt means to fit and prepare us to be worthy members of the church triumphant in heaven.

BUT here a queſtion may ariſe, "In what manner it is moſt "expedient for us to make our addreſſes to God in the public "congregation, whether in ſet forms, or extemporary in-"ventions; and which ſerves the ends of our devotion beſt, "one common liturgy, or words and expreſſions every day "new." That ſet forms of prayer are no where prohibited in ſcripture, nay, that in ſome places, they are expreſsly commanded and preſcribed, is evident to every one that is converſant in the writings of either Teſtament. [p] In the Old Teſtament we find the Lord ſpeaking unto Moſes thus, [q] Speak unto Aaron, and unto his ſons, ſaying, On this wiſe ye ſhall bleſs the children of Iſrael, ſaying unto them, The Lord bleſs thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face to ſhine upon thee; the Lord

Set forms not prohibited.

p Smalridge's Sermons q Numb. vi. 22.

ord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace; or can we ſuppoſe that God was leſs ready to vouchſafe his leſſing to the people, becauſe his miniſter always implored it the ſame form of words. And as the prieſts under the law ere required to bleſs the people in a ſet form, ſo were the eople ſometimes enjoined to offer up their prayers to God in ords that were prepared before-hand for them. Thus, when murder was committed, and the author of it unknown, the lders of the adjoining city were directed to aſk God's pardon this form; [r] Our hands have not ſhed this blood, neither ave our eyes ſeen it: Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people ſrael, whom thou haſt redeemed, and lay not innocent blood nto thy people of Iſrael's charge: and ſo the blood was to be orgiven.

IN the New Teſtament, we find our Saviour preſcribing to his diſciples a ſet form of prayer, when he ordered them to pray after this manner; Our Father, &c. For it was not only the uſtom of the Jews in general to uſe forms of prayer, but for heir doctors likewiſe to teach their ſcholars ſome particular orm, compoſed by them, in order to diſtinguiſh them from other eople. In compliance to this cuſtom, John the Baptiſt, as it ppears by the place in St Luke, taught his diſciples a pecuiar form; and for this reaſon, one of our Saviour's diſciples omes and requeſts of him that he would be pleaſed to compoſe one for their uſe, Lord, teach us to pray, as John alſo taught his diſciples; upon which we find that our Saviour complied with his requeſt, and accordingly preſcribed them the form which he had given them before, as a pattern of prayer upon the Mount. And as our Saviour preſcribed them this form, it is hardly to be queſtioned but that, in obedience to his command, they made uſe of it, even though we have no expreſs declaration in holy writ that they did ſo; becauſe, we may obſerve further, that wherever we have any prayers recorded, there is preſumption enough to believe that they offered them up in a ſet form. Thus we find the whole company of primitive chriſtians, in conjunction with the apoſtles themſelves, [s] lifting up their voice with one accord, and ſaying, Lord, thou art God, which haſt made heaven, and earth, and the ſea, and all that is in them, &c. And as they all joined, not only with their hearts, but with their voices; not only in the ſame thoughts, but in the ſame words; unleſs we will ſay that all were immediately inſpired to utter the ſame ſyllables, for which there is no ground in the hiſtory, nor any probability in reaſon, we muſt allow, that they prayed by a form compoſed before-hand.

but enjoined.

[t] WHAT has been ſaid upon this head is ſufficient to ſhew, if not the neceſſity, at leaſt the lawfulneſs of praying by a form: for ſince God was pleaſed to preſcribe forms to be uſed in his public

r Deut. xxi. 7, 8. s Acts iv. 24. t Smalridge's Sermons.

public worſhip in the Jewiſh church; ſince Chriſt taught his diſciples to pray after a form; and they, upon ſundry occaſions, in all probability, made uſe of premeditated forms; will undeniably follow, that to uſe ſet forms of prayer is not repugnant to the will of God; is no ſtinting of the Spirit, no impediment to devotion, no inſtance of ſuperſtition, no part of forbidden will-worſhip, no invention of antichriſt, &c.

Their expediency.

THAT all things ſhould be done to the glory of God, we are very frequently warned in ſcripture; and we may leave it to the judgment of any ſober perſon, whether the glory of God is beſt promoted by ſuch prayers, wherein ſtrict care is taken that nothing ſhould be uttered unbecoming the Divine Majeſty, or by ſuch extemporary conceptions, wherein many unſeemly and irreverent ſpeeches at leaſt, are too commonly, and in a manner unavoidably, poured forth. That all things ſhould be done for edification is another ſcripture-precept; and whether thoſe prayers which are formed by the mature advice of many perſons eminent for wiſdom and piety, and which are both known and underſtood by the people, or thoſe which are conceived on a ſudden by one man, whoſe abilities perhaps are not very great, and which thoſe who join with them muſt firſt ſtudy to underſtand before they can concur therein, are moſt likely to edify the church, can with unprejudiced perſons bear no diſpute. "If I know not the meaning of the voice, ſays the apoſtle, I ſhall be unto him that ſpeaketh a barbarian, and he that ſpeaketh ſhall be a barbarian unto me: now the meaning of the voice may be as unknown to us, if a prayer be made in a phraſe, as if it be made in a language that we do not underſtand; and he that prays in an unintelligible manner, is as much a barbarian to thoſe that hear him, as if he prayed in an unknown tongue: ſo that, unleſs all miniſters are maſters of perſpicuity, which perhaps is a talent as rare as any, then he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, nay, he indeed that is never ſo learned, may not always be able to ſay Amen to a prayer which he may not always be able to underſtand.

The excellency of our church liturgy.

IN a word, if earneſt deſires, if devout affections, if cloſe attention, and fervour of ſpirit do recommend our prayers to God, all theſe advantages may rather be hoped for by thoſe, who uſing a prepared and known form, have nothing farther to do than to excite in their minds, paſſions ſuitable to the buſineſs they are upon; than by ſuch, who depending wholly upon the conceptions of another, muſt firſt endeavour to catch thoſe words which fall from him; then be employed in finding out their meaning; then conſider whether that which is aſked be lawful for them to aſk, and whether they can heartily join with ſuch a petition or thankſgiving; which, before they can have determined in their own thoughts, it may be too late for

u 1 Cor. xiv. 11.

for them to join in, because the minister is perhaps, by this time, passed on to another quite different matter. If therefore, by composed forms, the infirmities of some men are best remedied; if our consent and communion with other christians is hereby best testified; if errors and irregularities in worship be by this means best prevented; if they are most subservient to edification, to true devotion, and to the glory of God; we may safely conclude that a well-composed form of public worship in the church is not only lawful, but expedient, and in some degree even necessary: and upon this account we may well be allowed to congratulate our mutual happiness, in being made members of a church, * wherein there is so great a treasure of rational devotion; where all the prayers are directed to a proper object, all clothed in proper and significant language, and all disposed in exact and regular order; where the praises are lofty, and suitable to the majesty of God; the confessions humble, and such as become sinners; the intercessions comprehend all the duties, and the supplications are extended to all the wants of mankind: where the whole indeed is so admirably fitted to the common concerns of a christian society, that when (as the Rubric enjoins) we make but use of some of them, our worship is not imperfect, and when we use them all, there is none of them superfluous: and therefore, if we be but careful to bring with us to the house of God such affections as become his saints, we need not doubt but that we shall there find such prayers to express these affections in, and will prove a reasonable service, and make the whole an offering of a sweet-smelling savour unto God.

3. Of Praise and Thanksgiving.

The distinction between praise and thanksgiving.

PRAISE and thanksgiving, though they are frequently used promiscuously, yet, in strictness of speech, have a different signification. x Our praise properly terminates in God, on the account of his natural excellencies and perfections, and is that act of devotion by which we confess and admire his several attributes; but thanksgiving is a narrower duty, and imports only a grateful sense and acknowledgment of past mercies. We praise God for all his glorious acts, of every kind, that regard either us or other men; for his very acts of vengeance, and those judgments which he sometimes sends abroad on the earth; but, properly speaking, we thank him only for the instances of his goodness, and only for such instances too, as we ourselves are, some way or other, concerned in. This is properly the distinction of the two words: but since the language of the scripture is generally less exact in this matter, we, in what follows, shall think ourselves at liberty to use them in a promiscuous sense; and accordingly shall inquire, I. What the nature of

* Cotes's and South's Sermons. x Atterbury's Sermons.

this duty implies; and, II. How reaſonable a thing it is that w ſhould perform it.

What they imply.

I. Now few are ſo ignorant as not to know that the duty o praiſe and thankſgiving to God implies our having a lively an devout ſenſe of his excellencies, and of his benefits; our recol lecting them with humility and thankfulneſs of heart; and our ex preſſing theſe inward affections by ſuitable outward ſigns; b ſongs and hymns, and ſpiritual ejaculations, as well as by a teno of life led anſwerable to ſuch vouchſafements. [y] When there fore we ſet ourſelves down, and call to remembrance the man experiments we have had of God's loving kindneſs to us; whe we dwell upon them by long meditation, and imprint the trace of them firm and indelible in our minds; when we raiſe ou conceptions to a due eſtimation of them, and, by attending t every circumſtance, improve their value to the higheſt pitch when upon this our heart glows with love, and we feel our ſelves carried to God by an affectionate ſenſe of what he ha done for us; when, thereupon, our lips overflow with praiſe and we cannot forbear expreſſing the riches of his goodneſs t us in all the outward acknowledgments of love and gratitude and laſtly, when we order our lives by the rule of his com mands, and, in return for his favours, devote ourſelves, both ſoul and body, to his ſervice; it is then that we offer unto him an acceptable ſacrifice of thankſgiving.

And accordingly, if we look into the great exemplar of gra titude, the royal prophet David, we ſhall find him regulating his praiſes to God after this very method: [a] I will remember the days of old, ſays he, and meditate on all thy works, and talk of all thy doings. [b] Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and for get not all his benefits: here is his deep recollection of the mer cies of God. Then he goes on; [c] I will praiſe thee, O Lord, among the people; I will ſing unto thee among the nations; for thy mercy is great as the heavens, and thy faithfulneſs reacheth unto the clouds. [d] How excellent is thy loving-kind neſs, O God, how precious are thy thoughts unto me, how great is the ſum of them! Here is his higheſt eſtimation of the divine benefits. Then he proceeds; [e] Becauſe thy loving kind neſs is better than life, my lips ſhall praiſe thee, [f] my ſoul ſhall be filled with marrow and fatneſs, my mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful lips. [g] Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me praiſe his holy name. Here is his grateful reſent ment of the kindneſs of God. Whereupon he breaks out; [h] I will praiſe the name of the Lord with a ſong, I will magnify him with thankſgiving. [i] I will ſing of the mercies of the Lord for ever, I will make known his faithfulneſs to all generations.

And

y Scott's Works, Vol. II. a Pſal. lxxvii. 11, 12. b Ibid. ciii. 2. c Ibid cviii. 3, 4. d Ibid. cxxxix. 17, 18. e Ibid. lxiii. 5. f Ibid. ver. 5. g Ibid. ciii. 1. h Ibid. lxix. 30. i Ibid. lxxxix. 1.

d then to complete all, he deliberates how he may yet farther tify his gratitude to God: [k] What shall I render unto God for his benefits? Whereupon he resolves; I will receive the p of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord: I will pay y vows unto him, even the vows of amendment and better edience, that I made unto him in my distress. Thus plainly s the Psalmist chalked out the duty, and taught us the way to thankful to our God. And,

II. How reasonable a thing is it for us to comply with such rections we may perceive by considering, 1. The nature of od, as it is extended to us. 2. The nature of man, as it is lated to God. And 3. The nature of the duty itself. The reasonableness of this duty

1. [l] OFFER unto God thanksgiving, says the Psalmist; to od, *i. e.* to him [m] who is the author, upholder, and preserver f our being, without whose goodness we had never been, and ithout whose care we cannot subsist one moment. To him, ho hath created this spacious world for our comfort and delec- ation; given us bodies of an excellent order and proportion, nd inspired them with souls, impressed with conspicuous cha- acters of his own divine essence. To him, who grants us free ccess, a constant intercourse, and familiar acquaintance with imself; stiles us his Friends and his Children, and, in pursu- nce of his paternal relation to us, pities our infirmities, assists ur wants, comforts our sorrows, and assuages all our pains. To him, whose goodness is like the strong mountains, and whose ercies never fail, taking care of us, when we regard not him, watching over us when we sleep, and remembering us when we orget ourselves. To him, who, as [n] St James expresses it, iveth freely, and upbraideth no man; who exacts no costly, o difficult, no impossible returns for his favours, but only a hearful acknowledgment of them, and a sincere performance of uch duties as our own welfare, did we but apprehend it, would bundantly bind us to. Is there any thing more? Yes, to him, who, that he might redeem us from misery, condescended to he lowest humiliation, to inhabit our frail and mortal nature, o undergo the laws and conditions of humanity, and at last taste he bitter cup of a most painful death: yea, to him, who not only descended from his imperial throne, and became a servant for our sake, but designed thereby to exalt us to a participation of his royal dignity, his divine nature, his eternal glory and bliss, submitting crowns and sceptres to our choice; crowns that cannot fade, and sceptres that can never be extorted from us. To him, lastly, whose benefits to commemorate is the greatest benefit of all; whose goodness to praise, whose greatness to admire, whose beneficence to feel, and whose presence to enjoy is heaven itself, the life of angels, and the supreme degree of all felicity. From the nature of God.

[k] Psal. cxvi. 11, &c. [l] Ibid. l. 14. [m] Barrow's Works, Vol. I. [n] James i. 5.

felicity. In a word, to him, whose benefits are immense great, innumerably many, and inexpressibly good; for, [o] Wh can utter the mighty acts of the Lord, or shew forth all hi praise? says one, who had spent most of his thoughts, and th best of his endeavours that way.

From his dealings with us.

2. THUS, if we look up to God, our great and only benefac tor, we cannot but perceive, that the duty of praise and thank giving to him is bound upon us by ties innumerable, and tha the good things we receive from above should, in grateful ac knowledgments, be sent back again thither, [p] as the rivers run int the sea; to the place, the ocean of beneficence, from whence th rivers come, thither should they return again. And, in lik manner, if we turn our eyes upon ourselves, we cannot but re member [q] that we are his creatures, sustained by his alms, an fed by his bounty; that every drop we drink, every morse we eat, every rag we wear, we receive from him; that w breathe in his air, move on his earth, and are every momen supported by his all-powerful arm. Nay, we are not only hi creatures, and pensioners to his bounty, but sinful creature likewise, that abuse his kindness, and pervert his blessings. Fo he gives us breath, and we blaspheme him with it; he give us health, and we expend it in intemperance; he gives u wealth, and we consume it upon our lusts; and yet, for all this he continues to be gracious unto us, and passes by many indig nities, as if his long-suffering were never to have an end. Nay we are his redeemed creatures, who had the honour, when be ings of a superior order were passed by, to have our lives ranso ed by the precious blood of God; and, from the power of sin, an the slavery of our most inveterate enemy, are set free; set fre the noblest way, not so much as the spirit of bondage remaining but are so become the servants, as at the same time, to obtai the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Can we rise an higher? Yes, we are to be his glorified creatures, to be admit ted into the society of saints and angels, where, having our bo dies fashioned, like unto Christs glorious body, and our souls ex alted to a participation of God, we shall [r] be blessed with a spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ. If then ther be any force in God's creating goodness; if any bonds in hi forbearing patience; if any endearments in his redeeming love if any obligations in the hope of our high calling: by these, a these are we bound to make thankful returns to him, fro whom we have received, and from whom we expect so much especially considering, that there are other inducements arisin from the nature of this duty itself, that engage us to the prac tice of it.

3. TH

o Psal. cvi. 2. p Eccles. i. 7. q Scott's Works, Vol. II. r Eph. i. 3.

3. THE royal Pſalmiſt has given us a pretty good account of general properties of praiſe and thankſgiving, under which ſt of its chief advantages may be comprized. [s] 'Praiſe the rd; for it is good to ſing praiſes unto our God; for it is aſant, and praiſe is comely. Praiſe the Lord, for it is good, it enlarges the powers and capacities of our ſouls, turning em from little and low things, upon their greateſt and nobleſt ject, the divine nature; and employing them in the diſcovery d admiration of thoſe ſeveral perfections that adorn it. It is od, [t] as it promotes and facilitates the practice of all other ties, inſomuch, that whoever is under a powerful ſenſe of od's goodneſs (as the truly thankful always are) will, with e greateſt chearfulneſs, run the ways of God's command- ents, becauſe he has a principle in him which converts the oſt painful duties into the moſt delightful recreations. It is ood, as it gives a great ſupport to our hope and dependence n God: for beſides that, the conſciouſneſs of having made ankful returns for what we have received will be a great nſolation to us in the time of our diſtreſs; the very remem- rance and recollection of God's former favours, which our rateful ſenſe of them will not fail to impreſs in our minds, ill prove a conſtant fund of happy experience, for our affiance him to live upon for the future. It is good, as it heightens nd improves the enjoyment of God's benefits to ſuch a degree, hat whilſt the unthankful, for want of a due eſtimate of his avours, live diſſatisfied, and grumble, as it were, over their rey, even while they are devouring it; thoſe that have a rateful ſenſe of his goodneſs to them, feed upon every bleſſing with content, and, like induſtrious bees, having ſucked out all he ſweetneſs of the flowers they live upon, go ſinging home with it to their hives. Once more it is good, becauſe it mighti- y obliges God to continue and repeat his favours to us: for, eeing he is the freeſt and moſt generous benefactor in the world, we may depend upon it, that, if we make the good uſe of his benefits, for which he deſigned them; if we render ſuch grateful returns for them, as are both delightful to him, and beneficial to ourſelves; he will be ſo far from ſtinting his hand to us for the future, that he will rejoice over us to do us good, and be as highly pleaſed to multiply his benefits upon us, as we can be to receive them.

From the excellency of the duty itſelf.

As good.

2. ANOTHER commendation of the duty is this: praiſe the Lord for it is pleaſant, * as it purſues the natural bent and in- clination of our minds, which are never more eaſy and delighted than when we are able to make grateful returns for the favours we have received. It is pleaſant, [x] as it proceeds from love, the fountain of pleaſure, the paſſion, which gives every thing we

Pleaſant,

[s] Pſal. cxlvii. 1. [t] Atterbury's Sermons, Vol. I. [u] Scott's Works, Vol. II. * Barrow's Works, Vol. I. [x] Atterbury, ibid.

we do and enjoy its reliſh and agreeableneſs; and from thank-
fulneſs, which involves in it the memory of paſt benefits, and i
as it were, a repeated enjoyment of them. It is pleaſant as
procures quiet and eaſe to the mind, by delivering it of thos
thoughts of praiſe and gratitude, thoſe exultations it is full o
and which would grow uneaſy and troubleſome to it if the
were kept in; for were the thankful refrained from makin
mention of God's mercies, it would be pain and grief to them
but then, then is their ſoul ſatisfied with marrow and fatneſ
when their mouth praiſeth them with joyful lips.

In other parts of our devotion there is ſomething painfu
and laborious to human nature: ; prayer awakens in us a ſor
rowful ſenſe of wants and imperfections, and confeſſion induce
a ſad remembrance of our guilts and miſcarriages; but thank
giving has nothing in it but a warm ſenſe of the mightieſt love
and the moſt endearing goodneſs, as it is the overflow of a
heart full of love, the free ſally and emiſſion of ſoul that is cap
tivated and endeared by kindneſs. We indeed, in this ſtate o
our defection, are, in a great meaſure, unacquainted with th
pleaſure and ſweetneſs of this bleſſed work; and the reaſon is
becauſe we have not a quick ſenſe and lively reliſh of the divin
goodneſs upon which it terminates. Had we this always pre
ſent with us, we ſhould feel ſo much joy and pleaſure in thank
giving, that it would be our heaven upon earth to breathe u
our ſouls to God in praiſe: but this we know, who know an
thing of religion, that to laud and magnify the Lord is the en
for which we were born, and the heaven for which we were
deſigned; and that, when we are arrived to ſuch a vigorou
ſenſe of the divine love as the bleſſed inhabitants of heaven hav
attained, we ſhall need no other, either pleaſure or employ
ment to make us for ever happy, but only to ſing eternal praiſe
and hallelujahs to our God, and to the Lamb that ſitteth upo
the throne: the vigorous reliſh of whoſe unſpeakable goodnes
to us will ſo inflame our love and animate our gratitude, tha
to eternal ages we ſhall never be able to refrain from breakin
out into new ſongs of praiſe; and then, every new ſong will creat
a new pleaſure, and every new pleaſure dictate a new ſong
and ſo round again for ever and ever. But theſe things are too
ſublime for our preſent comprehenſion: only let us conſult th
experience of ſuch as make this part of devotion their conſtan
buſineſs, and they will aſſure us that there is nothing under
heaven ſo pleaſant and delightful, as from a warm and vigor
ous ſenſe of the love of God, to breathe up our ſouls to him in
praiſe and thankſgiving; that this gives ſuch a jubilee to the
mind, ſuch a ſprightly recreation to the heart, as far exceeds the
moſt ſtudied artificial pleaſures of ſenſuality; and therefore
praiſe

ise the Lord; for the Lord is good: sing praises to his name it is pleasant.

3. THE other commendation of this duty is, that praise is mely; as certainly a more becoming exercise cannot be con- ved than this, wherein the best instruments of nature are ployed in the highest offices of grace; our hearts in recollect- , and our tongues in relating the loving-kindness of God. have the great king of heaven and earth surrounded with d acclamations of his joyful subjects, his excellence proclaim- and exalted above the highest praise, his wonderful works gnified and admired in triumphant acknowledgments, and his unty and love celebrated and adored with songs and magnifi- s; what an emblem is here of the blessed above; and what re graceful and comely sight can we imagine than a full con- egation of saints blessing and praising the Lord; and all the ile that their voices are raised, exercising their minds like- se, and mounting up to heaven upon the wings of divine e and ardent aspirations; and all this out of pure affections, d without any view of self-interest, [a] which is more than can said of other parts of our religious service? Our prayers e designed for the relief of our wants, our faith leans upon me future good, and our hope is a comfortable expectation of : [a] but praise is a generous and unmercenary principle, which opose no other end to itself, but to do as is fit for a creature dowed with such faculties, to do towards the most perfect and neficent of beings, and to pay the willing tribute of honour ere, where the voice of reason directs us to pay it. In short, aise is the most excellent part of our religious worship, the mmon work of the church both militant and triumphant, the urce of joy and refreshment here, and the very soul and spirit heaven hereafter: the perfections of God's nature are its ob- ct, and the very act itself is the perfection of ours. And therefore, whether it be for great or for small, for common extraordinary, for present or past, for private or public, for mporal or spiritual blessings; whether it be for the occur- nces of providence that are averse to our desire, or for those at are accommodated to our liking; in all states and conditions, all the changes and chances of life, let the praises of God be ver in our mouths; and in our mind this [c] song of Moses, the rvant of the Lord, and this song of the Lamb; great and arvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true e thy ways, thou king of saints; who shall not fear thee, O ord, and glorify thy name?

And comely.

CHAP.

[a] Norris's Discourses, Vol. II. [a] Atterbury's Sermons, Vol. I. [b] Barrow's Works, Vol. I. [c] Rev. xv. 3.

CHAP. II.

Our DUTY towards our NEIGHBOUR; and,

1. Of universal Love and Charity.

Charity, what.

ST PAUL, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, has giv us a description of this great christian duty, as it relates our neighbour, which far exceeds any delineation that we c possibly devise. [a] Charity suffereth long, and is kind; chari envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up, do not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not eas provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but r joiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all thing hopeth all things, endureth all things: so that, to explain t nature and properties of this virtue, we need only give a sho comment upon the apostle's words; and then proceed, 1. T show the obligations of it; and, 2. The measures and induc ments of our performing it.

St Paul's description of it explained.

1. CHARITY suffereth long. [b] The man that is possessed this excellent grace, is not apt quickly, and upon every slig occasion, to conceive a displeasure, much less to meditate r venge against those who behave themselves ill towards him. H considers how subject to frailties mankind are, how easily b trayed by infirmities, and surprise, and passion, to things th are inordinate: he makes just allowances therefore for inadve tencies and indiscretions, and suppresses his resentment f wrongs that are avowed and manifest, so long as they contin to be tolerable: and in this he differs from the jealous and ca tious, the peevish and hasty, who either fancy themselves i jured and affronted, when nothing like it is intended, or fun and take fire upon every provocation and neglect.

2. CHARITY is kind; and therefore he that is master of h temper, as he is slow in taking offence, so is he sure not to gi any; and is so far from rendering evil for evil, that his study to overcome evil with good. His conversation is sweet an obliging, and his carriage and behaviour free, candid and ing nuous. He considers that the lowest of mankind are of the sam make with himself, distinguished only by a few accidental circu stances; and therefore, how exalted soever his own station b his demeanour is full of compliance and condescension. And he thinks that no one was ever born for himself alone; so h makes it his constant aim and endeavour to be as beneficial to a mankind as possibly he can: quite contrary to that sour and su len, that bitter and malicious disposition too common in th world

a 1 Cor. xiii. 4, &c. b Calamy's Sermons, and Stanhope on the Epistles an Gospels, Vol. II.

orld, which is continually employed in doing miſchief, in diſ-rbing the quiet, in obſtructing the good of its neighbour, and aking men, whom nature ordained for mutual helps and com-orts, continual plagues and torments to each other.

3. CHARITY envieth not: though God vouchſafe others a rger meaſure of knowledge, or riches, or credit, or honour, r indeed of any bleſſing, whether temporal or ſpiritual, the haritable man grudges it not, murmurs not at it, but is per-ctly ſatisfied and contented in the preference which theſe diſ-nguiſhing favours give them above himſelf; nay, he makes heir happineſs become really and truly his own, and finds as uch, if not more pleaſure and delight in their ſucceſs and roſperity than they themſelves do: whilſt all the content and by which their good fortune adminiſters to them, comes pure nd unmixed to him, without bearing any part in the cares and roubles wherewith it is uſually attended.

4. CHARITY vaunteth not itſelf; and therefore he who is f this temper, has always a modeſt and humble opinion of him-elf, pretending to no accompliſhments that he has not, and hruſting himſelf into no buſineſs above his capacity and proper phere. In private he entertains himſelf frequently with the enſe and conſciouſneſs of his own ignorance, infirmities and de-nerits; and, in public, affects no noiſe or glaring figure, but eſires rather to appear unobſerved and undiſtinguiſhed. Upon ther mens abilities he always ſets a due value; receives their entiments with deference; offers his own with diffidence; and hrough his whole behaviour ſhews, that in honour he prefers nd eſteems others better than himſelf. And as he pretends to o talents that he has not; ſo he is not puffed up even with what he has: for he conſiders them as gifts and graces, which iniſter great ground for humility and thankfulneſs, and all maginable care to anſwer the purpoſes for which they were ntruſted, but no manner of pretence for vanity and ſelf-conceit; which, whenever it gets poſſeſſion of a man, carries him ſo into he contemplation of his own imaginary perfections, as to make im ſlight and deſpiſe all the world beſides, and think himſelf wronged, and affronted, and unjuſtly treated, if every one does ot value him, and his judgment in all things, at the ſame rate nd proportion that he does himſelf.

5. CHARITY does not behave itſelf unſeemly; and there-ore he that is poſſeſſed of this virtue uſes no opprobrious words r geſtures, endeavours to diſhonour or diſparage no man's per-on; but is ſo courteous without affectation, and ſo condeſcend-ng without intereſt or deſign, that, as St Chryſoſtom and others nterpret the word, he thinks no offices, though never ſo mean, elow or miſbecoming him; but reckons that whatever incon-enience ſuch kind of humiliations may occaſion, it is amply ompenſated by the benefits which others receive from them.

And well may charity be thus liberal of its ſervices, and regard leſs of the manner of its condeſcenſions, when the next charac ter of it, as the apoſtle tells us, is,

6. THAT ſhe ſeeketh not her own; and therefore he that her votary, is ſo far from projecting gain and profit to himſe by the favours and good offices he does to others, that he beneficent to the evil and unthankful, to the indigent, and thoſ that are unable to make him any requital. The largeneſs o his heart, which is ſenſibly affected for human nature, neve ſeparates itſelf by any abſtracted views; but wiſhing eaſe an proſperity to all mankind, contributes its utmoſt to ſerve an benefit them, and eſteems the glory of God and the greater gai of his brethren, an ample reward for his own labour and ſuffer ings, nay, (upon ſo beneficial an account) for his own loſſes an inconveniencies.

7. CHARITY is not eaſily provoked; for it keeps the min calm and ſmooth; corrects that heat which either the natura conſtitution or the greatneſs of a provocation kindles in ou breaſt; and, even when our reſentment is moſt juſt, prevent its flaming out into rage and fury beyond the bounds of reaſo and religion. It ſecures us from all paroxyſms of anger as th Greek word imports, and keeps that unruly paſſion under ſuc limits and reſtrictions as never to betray us into any indecenc of behaviour, much leſs any raſh and unwarrantable actions.

8. CHARITY thinketh no evil; is ſo far from ſuſpecting th worſt of men and their actions, that it always puts the faire interpretations upon them. To the good which they do it al lows all juſt commendation; and, as it never charges any bu upon undeniable evidence, ſo it ever appears to excuſe and ex tenuate their offences. It puts us in mind, when we happen t be angry with an injurious brother, of the many kindneſſes h once did us, and ſets his former good offices in balance to hi preſent miſbehaviour. It imputes a great deal to miſtake, t miſinformation, to age, to ignorance, to infirmities, &c. an would have any thing be thought the cauſe, rather than ill-wil or propenſe deſign to offend.

9. CHARITY rejoiceth not in iniquity, but in the truth takes no pleaſure in falſe reports and malicious inſinuations which tend to defame and diſparage our neighbour, a pleaſure as common as it is barbarous; but when ſuch ſuggeſtions have not ground, and ſhed their venom, is heartily glad of hearing the injured ſufferer's innocence vindicated, and his good name reſcued from all the ſcandal that malice or miſtake had caſt upon it.

10. CHARITY beareth, or, as it ſhould be rendered, covereth and concealeth all things; and is ſo far from expoſing men's failings to the world, or thinking itſelf at liberty to make them the ſubject of public diſcourſe, and the jeſt and diverſion of al companies

mpanies, that it chuſes rather to hide and caſt a vail over em, be they never ſo many, or never ſo well known: For,

11. CHARITY believeth all things: without preſuming to dge men's hearts, or pry into their ſecret intentions, it diſ-ſes us, firſt to think favourably of every one, and then to edit all that can be ſaid in behalf of thoſe that are ill-ſpoken , if there be any grounds for ſuch a belief: and if ever there not, yet ſtill,

12. CHARITY hopeth all things: whoever ſins, ſhe hopes it is t of weakneſs, or ſurpriſe, or inadvertency, and not out of ilfulneſs or habitual cuſtom; whoever errs, ſhe hopes it is out ignorance, and unhappy education, or unavoidable prejudice, nd not out of a wicked and depraved mind; and upon theſe ccounts, be the man's condition what it will, ſhe never deſpairs, ut wiſhes and prays, and, by all proper methods, labours to ring about his converſion. And,

13. LASTLY, though many attempts of this kind have been ruitleſs, yet ſtill charity continues unwearied, and can away with injuries and delays, grievous to be borne, in hopes that God will at laſt open the eyes of the very worſt, and give them epentance to the acknowledgment of the truth: and this I onceive to be the ſenſe of charity's enduring all things.

THESE are the characters wherein the apoſtle has deſcribed his moſt excellent and extenſive virtue, which in the main may e ſaid to conſiſt, [c] in an eaſineſs to pardon, a readineſs to oblige, nercy to the diſtreſſed, bounty to the indigent, candour and weetneſs, generoſity and diſintereſtedneſs in our converſation owards all men. And ſo we proceed to conſider,

I. OUR manifold obligations to the practice of this duty. That by the original order and conſtitution of nature, men are o made and framed, that they neceſſarily want one another's elp and aſſiſtance for their mutual ſupport and preſervation in he world; that they cannot ſubſiſt, at leaſt, cannot enjoy any comforts of life, independently on each other, but are manifeſtly itted, by the very frame of their nature, to live in ſocieties, whereof charity and mutual friendſhip is the common bond, is oo plain to be controverted. In this reſpect all men naturally tand upon the ſame level, have all the ſame wants and deſires, nd are all in the ſame need of each other's aſſiſtance: every man therefore, as he is a man, is bound by the law of his na-ture, *i. e.* by common humanity, to look upon himſelf as a part or member of that one univerſal body or community, which is made up of all mankind; to think himſelf born and ſent into the world on purpoſe to promote the good and welfare of all his fellow-creatures; and conſequently obliged, as the neceſſary and only effectual means to that end, to embrace them all with univerſal love, charity, and benevolence.

Our obligations to it.

1. From the nature of things.

AND

[c] Cotes's Sermons. [d] Clarke's Sermons.

AND as it is founded in the law of nature, ſo is it conſonan to the inclinations of mens minds, to be kindly affectioned t and beneficial one towards another; inſomuch, that if covet ouſneſs, and revenge, and other fooliſh and abſurd paſſion were not ſuffered to over-rule this natural diſpoſition, the would univerſally enjoy the happy fruits and effects of it. Fo even in this preſent corrupt ſtate of the world, as far as men vices will permit them, they ſtill deſire to keep up a gener commerce and communication with each other; they love t increaſe their dependencies, by multiplying affinities; to enlarg their friendſhips by mutual good offices; and to eſtabliſh ſocie ties by a communication of arts, and labour, and induſtry: an ſince the only poſſible means of preſerving ſuch ſocieties, in an tolerable and durable manner, is the practice of mutual love an univerſal benevolence, this plainly ſhews us what the directio and tendency of uncorrupted nature is.

2. From the nature of God.

AND as to love, and do good to one another is conſonant t the original inclinations of mens minds, ſo is it agreeable to tha nature of God which we are required to imitate, and thoſe law of God which we are bound to obey. God is love, as the a poſtle ſtiles him, an infinite and inexhauſtible fountain of never failing goodneſs; who, being eternally happy in the enjoymen of his own unſpeakable perfections, could have no other motiv to create things at firſt, but only that he might communicat his goodneſs and happineſs to his creatures; as he continues t preſerve them for no other reaſon, but that he may ſtill con tinue to do good to them: for [e] he maketh his ſun to riſe o the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and o the unjuſt; [f] giving us from heaven fruitful ſeaſons, and fillin our hearts with food and gladneſs. Now, for the ſame reaſon that God does himſelf continually delight in doing good, an ſeems to take an eſpecial pleaſure in deſcribing himſelf by tha particular attribute of love and goodneſs; for the ſame reaſo it muſt neceſſarily be his will, that all rational creatures ſhoul imitate him in that excellent perfection. To this purpoſe w may obſerve that he hath given us noble powers and faculties hath endued us with reaſon and underſtanding to diſcern be tween good and evil; and implanted in our minds ſuch affec tions and diſpoſitions as naturally incline us to mutual benevo lence and aſſiſtance. He hath ſo framed and conſtituted ou nature, and ſo ordered the circumſtances of our preſent ſtate a to make ſociety and friendſhip neceſſary to the ſupport and com fort of life, that men might be continually exerciſed in th practice of theſe divine virtues. He has interwoven the inte reſts of men, and made the happineſs of every particular perſo ſo depend upon the welfare of the public, that each one fro the ſenſe of his own wants and exigencies, might ſee the rea ſonablenes

[e] Matth. v. 45. [f] Acts xiv. 17.

nableneſs and neceſſity of making it his principal buſineſs to do ood to others. In fine, he has given us no other way of exreſſing, ſo acceptably, our love and gratitude to himſelf, whom we have not ſeen, as by loving and doing good to our brehren, whom we have ſeen; for [h] no man hath ſeen God at any ime, but if we love one another, hereby we know that God, hough inviſible, really dwelleth in us; that his love is perected in us, and that we dwell in him and he in us, becauſe we re imitators of his nature, and partakers of his Spirit.

3. From ſcripture.

NOR are we only obliged to love, and to do good to one nother, by the ties of common humanity, as we are men, and artakers of the ſame nature; but, as chriſtians, we are to look pon ourſelves as brethren, in a more peculiar manner, being ll the children of God in Chriſt, members all of the ſame body, artakers all of the ſame Spirit, and heirs all of the ſame bleſſed ope of immortality. For thus the apoſtle argues; [i] There is ne body, and one ſpirit, even as ye are called in one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptiſm, one God and ather of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you ll: wherefore [k] I beſeech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowlineſs and meekneſs, ith long-ſuffering; forbearing one another in love, and endeaouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Its peculiarity to chriſtians.

NEITHER have we only the example of God's love and oodneſs in general propoſed to our imitation, but, as chriſtians, ve have it in a more particular and extraordinary manner ſet efore us, in that ſingular inſtance of the redemption of manind by the death of his Son; of which great and undeſerved ercy we, being all partakers, and having all our hopes of hapineſs founded upon it, are conſequently under the ſtrongeſt bligation to be, in our proportion, kind, and merciful, and haritable to our brethren, as God has been infinitely good and erciful to us; for ſo we find the ſame apoſtle arguing again: Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy, and beloved, owels of mercy, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, longuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; f any man has a quarrel againſt any, even as Chriſt forgave ou, ſo alſo do ye: and, above all things, put on charity, which s the bond of perfectneſs, and let the peace of God rule in your earts, to the which alſo ye are called in one body.

ONCE more: nor is this duty obligatory, as it proceeds from the ord of God only, but as it proceeds with a ſingular enforcement, eing the peculiar law and command of our Lord and Saviour, n which he inſiſts particularly, and ſeems to recommend it bove all others, as the moſt indiſpenſible qualification of a ſinere chriſtian. [m] A new commandment, ſays he, I give unto you,

[h] 1 John iv. 20. [i] 1 John iv. 12, 13. [i] Eph. iv. 4. [k] Ibid. iv. 1. [l] Col. iii. 12. [m] John xiii. 34.

you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another; and he makes it, as it were, the distinguishing mark and badge of his profession; for by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love towards one another. He himself whilst he was here upon earth, went continually about doing good; and in so doing, hath set us an example, wherein he requires that we should follow his steps: and accordingly, we find the apostles every where declaring, that universal love and charity is the end of the commandment, the principal aim and design of our whole christian law; and that, being destitute of this, all our other pretences to religion, all our zeal for the service and honour of God, all our gifts and accomplishments, of what kind soever they be, whether natural or supernatural, will avail us nothing: for [n] though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, says St Paul, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal, *i. e.* all my pretences to religion are false and empty; and though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing; and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it availeth me nothing.

And great excellency

AND well may the scriptures lay so great a stress upon the practice of universal love and charity, since it is a temper and disposition of mind, of all others, the most perfective of our rational nature. It is that which makes the soul like unto God, and is at once the condition and ground, both of our present happiness, and that which is to come: for we must be like unto God, if we will see him as he is, and must first attain that frame of mind wherein the happiness of heaven essentially consists, if ever we hope to become partakers of it. In a word, charity is the disposition of heaven, the ultimate end and design of that religion which was revealed on purpose to conduct us thither; and to which most of the other virtues, gifts, and excellencies are but subservient means, and such as must be done away when that which is perfect is come: for [o] whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. Faith, which is our firm belief, and hope, which is our present expectation of things future, shall both be made void by fruition; but charity and goodness never fail; for they are the dispositions of mind which are begun in the virtues of this life, and completed in the glories of the next. And so we proceed,

The rule of it.

II. To consider in what measure, and from what inducements, we are farther engaged to perform this duty. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, this is the rule; and it is the

[n] 1 Cor. xiii. 1, &c. [o] Ibid. ver. 8.

the peculiar excellency of this rule, that by it we may eaſily diſcern all the ſpecialities of our duty, without having recourſe to any external inſtruction. [p] For ſince every one, by his own experience, knows what it is to love himſelf; ſince every one is conſcious in what manner he uſes to treat himſelf, it is but conſulting his own breaſt, and that will teach him in what manner he is to treat his neighbour.

Do we not, for inſtance, ſo highly value and eſteem ourſelves, that no defects obſervable in us, no miſchances befallen us, no faults committed by us, can alter the good opinion we have of ourſelves? This may teach us what regard and value we ſhould ever preſerve for our neighbour. Do we not ſincerely endeavour our own welfare and advantage of every kind; wiſh good ſucceſs to all our undertakings; and, if we rightly underſtand ourſelves, deſire the health and happineſs of our immortal ſouls? This may inform us what we are to wiſh and deſire for our neighbour. Have we not a ſenſible complacency in our own proſperity, and are extremely glad to find ourſelves thriving and flouriſhing in wealth, in reputation, or any other accommodation or ornament of life? On the other hand, do we not ſeriouſly grieve at our own diſaſters, and diſappointments, and heartily bemoan and pity ourſelves, when fallen into pain, or poverty, or any other preſſing calamities? This may inſtruct us what pleaſure we are to feel in our neighbour's proſperity, and how to condole and commiſerate his misfortunes. Are we eaſily angry with ourſelves? Do we retain implacable grudges, or execute malicious deſigns againſt ourſelves? Yea, rather are we not meek and patient towards ourſelves, excuſing our own infirmities and follies, and forgiving ourſelves the moſt heinous offences and outrages againſt our own intereſt, honour, and welfare? Hence we may learn the leſſons of meekneſs and patience towards our neighbour, in bearing his infirmities, and remitting any wrongs or diſcourteſies we have received from him. Are we rude in our deportment, or harſh in our language towards ourſelves, apt to cenſure our own actions, blazon our defects, and aggravate our failings, and not rather conceal our blemiſhes, and extenuate our crimes? Do we delight to report, or to hear all ſtories of ourſelves, and not rather endeavour all we can to ſtifle them, to tie the tongues, and ſtop the ears of men againſt them? Hence we may likewiſe learn how civil and courteous in our behaviour, how fair and ingenuous in our dealing, how candid and mild in our judgment or cenſure we ſhould be towards our neighbour. Thus reflecting on ourſelves, and making our practice towards ourſelves the pattern of our dealing with others, we ſhall not fail of performing this duty, and making our charity commenſurate to our ſelf-love.

AND

[p] Barrow's Works, Vol. I.

The reasonableness of it.

AND indeed, considering the near relation we have to ou another, and how, in the necessary and substantial properti of our nature, we are all the same; and distinguished only b what is contingent and circumstantial to us, we cannot but per ceive the great reasonableness of loving our neighbour to thi degree, as he is the express image of ourselves, but much more as he is created in the divine likeness and similitude. The pro phet Malachi has a very wise observation to this purpose q Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us Why then do we deal treacherously every man against his bro ther? It is barbarous not to love our own nature, but highl impious to hate or vilify him, in whom God hath formed some though weak resemblances of his own perfections. r How contemptible soever he may be in the circumstances of his for tune, yet he has in him an immortal spirit, that shall live fo ever, and live with God and angels; he has in him those power and faculties that render him capable of serving and enjoyin his great Creator: and how dear and valuable he is to God we may best perceive by considering what God has done for him He has not only made him a little lower than the angels, an crowned him with glory and honour; but, as if this world were too mean, has prepared a more glorious one to receive him he spares and indulges him, as a tender parent his beloved child guards and provides for him by a kind and wakeful providence woos and courts him by the sollicitations of his holy Spirit; an has provided a standing propitiation for his sins, by the sa crifice of his own beloved Son. In a word, he rejoices ove him to do him good, and longs, as it were, to have him with hi in heaven: and can we think that the Almighty loves with fond passion, and where there is no ground and foundation fo his love? Herein therefore we have an example set us, how w are to love him whom God loves so well; and s this command ment we have from him, that he who loveth God, loveth hi brother also: the fulfilling of which law, which St James call the Royal Law t, is the great perfection of our natures, th advancement and enlargement of our souls, the chief ornamen and beauty of a great mind; that which makes us like God, th best, most perfect, and happiest Being; and in that too, whic is the prime excellency, and happiness, and glory of the divin nature.

Motives to it.

OF what happy tendency this universal love and charity i u to free our souls from those unruly and disquieting passions o anger and envy, of malice and revenge, of jealousy and discon tent, which are the great torments of our spirits; to make ou minds calm and chearful, and maintain us in the possession an quiet enjoyment of ourselves; to preserve us from many mischie

q Mal. ii. 10. r Lucas's Sermons, Vol. II. s 1 John iv. 21. t James ii. 8
u Archbishop Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I.

ischiefs and inconveniencies which enmity and ill-will conually occasion; to gain friends, and reclaim enemies, and make very condition either pleasant, or easy, or tolerable to us, is rified by every day's experience.

Of what particular note and observation, in the first and best es of religion, the practice of this duty was among christians; ow it was the mark and badge of their profession, and grew to a proverb among the heathens, Behold, how these christians ve one another; how some of the * greatest enemies of our rofession admired it, and esteemed the example not unworthy eir own imitation, is what we are informed of from the reords of antiquity: and therefore, to conclude this head in the ords of the blessed apostle; † if there be any consolation in hrist, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if y bowels and mercies; if any endearments in our common ature, and common christianity, if any inducement in the beefits and advantages of any duty, if any encouragement in the ractice, and examples of others, then fulfil ye my joy, that ye e like-minded; and, having the same love, [x] be pitiful, be ourteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; ut contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, hat ye should inherit a blessing.

2. Of loving Enemies.

THE Jews, having read that their ancestors [y] were commissioned by God, as ministers of his justice, utterly to estroy the seven nations that possessed the land of Canaan beore them; to blot out the remembrance of Amalek under heaen, and to have no peace with the Ammonites and Moabites, heir declared enemies; [z] considered not that these were speial cases, fixed by the divine command, and grounded upon easons both of state and religion, but drew an inference very alsely from them to their own private and personal quarrels, nd advanced it into a maxim, that though in general they were o love their neighbours, yet they not only might, but ought o hate their enemies, especially such as were enemies to their aw, and the manner of their religious worship. This their doctors taught with much assurance, and the people received it with a malicious readiness, being naturally violent and revengeful: but our Saviour, in his sermon on the Mount, endeavours

The occasion of our Saviour's commanding this duty.

* Julian, in his letter to Arsacius, the heathen high-priest of Galatia, gives this memorable testimony of the christians, that their charity was not limited and confined only to themselves, but extended even to their enemies. His words are these: It is a shame, when the Jews suffer none of theirs to beg, and the impious Galileans (so he calls christians by way of reproach) relieve, not only their own, but those also of our religion, that we only should be defective in so necessary a duty. Archbishop Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I.

† Phil. ii. 1, 2. x 1 Pet. iii. 8, 9. y Vid. Deut. vii. 16, &c. Chap. xxv. 19. Chap. xxiii. 3, 4. z Gardiner's Sermons.

to correct their miſtake, and to preſcribe to his followers the very contrary habit of mind: Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy; but I ſay to you, love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you.

To love our enemies, what.

LOVE your enemies; [a] here the inward affection is required: bleſs them that curſe you; here outward civility and affability are enjoined, in oppoſition to all rude and opprobrious language: do good to them that hate you; here real acts of kindneſs are commanded to be done even to our bittereſt and moſt malicious enemies: pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you. The higheſt expreſſions of enmity that can be imagined are calumny and cruelty, and yet we are commanded to pray for thoſe that touch us in theſe two tendereſt points of all, our reputation and our life: and to ſecure the ſincerity of our charity towards our enemies, we are required to expreſs it by our hearty prayers to God for them: to God, I ſay, before whom it is both impious and dangerous to diſſemble, and from whom we can expect no mercy for ourſelves, if, with feigned lips, we beg it of him for others.

THIS is the deſcription that our Saviour gives us of the duty, and accordingly we ſhall conſider farther; I. Wherein it conſiſts; and, II. By what arguments it may be enforced.

It conſiſts in a freedom from malice.

I. 1. NOW the firſt ſtep towards loving our enemy, is diſcharging our minds of all rancour and virulence towards him; for where the leaſt particle of this is, it will not be long before it diſcover itſelf in our words and actions. [b] Upon this account the ſcripture very ſignificantly calls it the [c] Leaven of Malice, which, being of a ſpreading and fermenting nature, will in time diffuſe a ſourneſs upon a man's whole behaviour. Nay, ſhould we ſuppoſe (which is very ſeldom found) that a man has ſuch an abſolute empire and command over his heart, as for ever to ſtifle his diſguſts, and to manage his actions in a conſtant contradiction to his affections; yet all this is but a myſtery of diſſimulation, and acting a part inſtead of acting a friend. Enmity however is a reſtleſs thing, and not to be diſſembled, without ſome torment to the mind that entertains it: and therefore we may preſume, that he who is reſolved to hate his enemy, and yet reſolves not to ſhew it, has turned the edge of his hatred inwards, and becomes a tyrant, and an enemy to himſelf; nor can he wiſh his moſt mortal adverſary a greater miſery than thus to carry a mind, always big and ſwelling, and ever ready to burſt, and yet never give it vent. Are we then perſuaded, that both our duty and intereſt require that we ſhould deport ourſelves with all ſigns of love to our enemies? Let us but take this eaſy courſe to

a Archbiſhop Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. I. b South's Sermons, Vol. III.
c 1 Cor. v. 8.

to entertain the thing in our hearts which we would manifeſt in our converſe, and then we ſhall find ſmall difficulty in the next inſtance of our love to our enemies; which is,

2. BLESSING them that curſe us. The word which we render Bleſs, implies both our ſpeaking them civilly to their faces, and ſpeaking well of them behind their backs: and [d] therefore, though they reproach, revile, and ſlander us; treat us, when preſent, with the moſt contemptuous and inſulting, the moſt ſcurrilous and bitter language; and when we are abſent, make it their buſineſs daily to leſſen and defame us, and to ſay all the bad things of us that they can either hear, imagine, or invent; our conduct is to be directly the reverſe of this. We muſt anſwer them in the moſt civil and courteous, the moſt obliging and good-natured terms; and, whenever we have occaſion to ſpeak of them in company, labour to conceal their faults, where charity and juſtice do not require us to diſcover them; put the beſt conſtruction upon all their actions, and be ready to publiſh whatever we know virtuous and commendable in them, even though they will acknowledge no ſuch quality in us: for thus the chriſtians behaved of old; We are fools, ſays St Paul [e], for Chriſt's ſake, but ye are wiſe in Chriſt; ye are honourable, but we are deſpiſed; being reviled, we bleſs; being perſecuted, we ſuffer; being defamed, we intreat. What harmony, what beauty, what ſweetneſs, what evenneſs, what perfection muſt there be in ſuch a temper as this! What command over his paſſions muſt we ſuppoſe in ſuch a perſon! And how ſtately and magnificent does it look, to ſee him unmoved by abuſe, and invincible by reproach, returning good for evil, and gracious wiſhes, for baſe and horrid imprecations! This certainly is one of the beſt arguments of a great and generous mind; for, according to the obſervation of the wiſe man, [f] he that is ſlow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his ſpirit, than he that taketh a city.

In ſpeaking well of them.

3. To love an enemy, is to do him all the real offices of kindneſs and beneficence that opportunity ſhall lay in our way. Has providence, for inſtance, put any of my enemy's concernments, his health, his eſtate, his preferment, or any other thing conducing to the convenience of his life, under my power or influence? Why, in all this, it gives me an opportunity to manifeſt, whether or no I can reach the ſublimity of this precept. [g] Is my enemy ſick and languiſhing, and is it in my power to cure him, as eaſily, or to kill him, as ſafely, as if I were his phyſician? Chriſtianity here commands me to be concerned for his weakneſs, to reſcue him from death and the grave, and to preſerve that life which perhaps would have once deſtroyed mine. Do I ſee mine enemy defrauded, and circumvented, and like to be

In doing them all good offices

[d] Gardiner's Sermons. [e] 1 Cor. iv. 10, &c. [f] Prov. xvi. 32. [g] South's Sermons, Vol. III.

be undone in his eſtate? I muſt not ſit ſtill and ſuffer him to be ruined, but contribute my aſſiſtance to diſcover the fraud, or repel the oppreſſion, and be as ready to preſerve him from poverty, as I would to relieve him, if he were in it. Does it lie in my way to put in a word to daſh, or promote my enemy's buſineſs or intereſt; to give him a ſecret blow, that ſhall ſtrike him to the ground for ever, and never know the hand from whence it came? Can I, by my power, obſtruct his lawful advantage and preferment, and ſo reap the diabolical ſatisfaction of a cloſe revenge? Can I do him all the miſchief imaginable, and that eaſily, ſafely, and ſucceſsfully, and ſo applaud myſelf in my power, my wit, my ſubtle contrivances? Yet all theſe vile practices, and accurſed methods of growing great, and riſing by the fall of an adverſary, are to be deteſted, as infinitely oppoſite to that innocence and clearneſs of ſpirit, that openneſs and freedom from deſign, which becomes a profeſſor of chriſtianity. On the contrary, amidſt all theſe opportunities of doing miſchief, I muſt eſpouſe my enemy's juſt cauſe, as his advocate or ſollicitor; I muſt help it forward by favourable ſpeeches of his perſon, a due acknowledgment of his merit, and a fair conſtruction of doubtful paſſages; and all this, if need be, in ſecret, where my enemy neither ſees nor hears me do him theſe ſervices, and, conſequently, where I have all the advantages and temptations to do otherwiſe.

In praying for them. 4. THE laſt and crowning inſtance of our love to our enemies is to pray for them; for by this a man acknowledges himſelf, as it were, unable to do enough for his enemy, and therefore he calls in the aſſiſtance of heaven, and engages omnipotence to complete the kindneſs. Prayer for my own proſperity, is indeed a neceſſary duty, but if we conſider it narrowly, it is but a kind of lawful and pious ſelfiſhneſs: but now, when I pray as heartily for my enemy as I do for my daily bread, and reckon his felicity among my own neceſſities; when I recommend him to God's infinite power and compaſſion, to reſtore his health, relieve his wants, and ſupply him with all needful bleſſings, even at the ſame time that he is maligning and perſecuting me; I then follow that divine pattern of perfect charity, who, in the midſt of the moſt barbarous and contumelious uſage, made both this prayer and apology for his murderers; [h] Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

[i] THIS then is the perfection of chriſtian charity, to be kindly affected, not to our friends and benefactors only, but to our enemies and perſecutors. It is a good degree of charity to ſpeak them fair, and give them good words at the ſame time that they are reviling and reproaching us; it is an higher degree of it, to confer real benefits upon them, and contribute what we can to their happineſs and welfare; but it is the top and perfection of

h Luke xxiii. 34. i Blackhall's Sermons, Vol. I.

it, to recommend them to God, who can do them more good n we can; can grant them that grace of repentance, which can only wish them; can bestow upon them that pardon for ir faults, which we can only request for them; and make m as great and as happy as he pleases, both in this world d in the next.

"But if all this is to be done for our enemies, where is the difference between those that have done us kindness, and those that have done us wrong? The most we can do for our best friends, and kindest benefactors, is to love them, to bless them, to do good to them, and to pray for them; if therefore we are obliged to do all this for our enemies, there is plainly nothing more left to be done for our friends." [k] Now ough it cannot be denied, that friendship in general is to be tended to all mankind, even to those that hate and injure us, well as to those that do us good; yet that particular and spe- l friendship, *i. e.* the loving of one person more than another, hich induces an additional obligation, and is one of the greatest mforts of society, is still as lawful and as commendable as ever, have an instance in our blessed Saviour himself; who, though was continually teaching and instructing, healing and doing od to an ungrateful people, and though he purposely came to the world to die for his enemies (which is the strongest ort of love that can be made even to our dearest friends) yet vertheless, he had his twelve disciples, with whom he con- rsed with more intimacy; whom he instructed with more igence and freedom; and prayed for, in a particular manner, th more than ordinary tenderness and concern: and even, in at number, three of them were singled out for special confi- nces and favours; and of these three, St John is eminently stinguished as his bosom-friend, and the disciple whom he ved: which makes it evident, beyond all controversy, that wever the christian religion may require a very extensive arity, yet has it still left room for the obligations of particular iendships and relations. I am bound indeed to relieve my emy if I can, when he wants; but I am not bound to make m extraordinary presents, to leave him legacies, or make him e inheritor of my estate. I am required to love my enemy, d to wish, and do him all the good I can; but it does not present- become necessary that I should take him into my bosom, and ve him the same place in my most secret thoughts and pur- ses that is due to my most familiar friend: and though I am deny my assistance to none, yet, when friend and foe stand competition, and both cannot be served at once, the apostle, think, has determined the preference; for [l] as we have an pportunity, says he, let us do good unto all men, but especially nto them that are of the household of faith; and by parity of reason,

An objection.

Answered.

k Gardiner's Sermons. l Gal. vi. 10.

reaſon, eſpecially to thoſe of this houſehold, that are bound t
us by a nearer tie of friendſhip or conſanguinity.

Another objection.

BUT the greateſt objection of all againſt the practice of thi
duty ariſes from the vaſt difficulty that is ſuppoſed in it
" [m] What, love an enemy, and embrace a wretch that woul
" take away my life, had he a ſecure opportunity! As we
" may you bid me pull up mountains by the roots, or ſtop th
" ſun in its courſe: the thing is impoſſible, and the whole ten
" dency of nature is againſt it. To forgive injuries, and tame
" ly put up affronts, are leſſons proper for the weak and puſi
" lanimous, for ſuch as want power, or an opportunity to ex
" preſs their reſentments; but they badly comport with a ma
" of ſpirit, and worſe with a man of honour." Now to ſilenc
this objection, we cannot do better than proceed,

Anſwered, from the motives and arguments for this duty.

II. To ſome of the motives and arguments that may recom
mend the love of our enemies, and reconcile us to the practic
of it, would we be impartial, and lay aſide our prejudice, w
might perhaps diſcern ſeveral great and good qualities in th
perſon that hates us: and, even in an enemy, whatſoever i
lovely, whatſoever is of good report, ſhould not go without i
due praiſe and acknowledgment. [n] Nay ſuppoſe the worſ
that he is never ſo much an enemy, and never ſo bad a ma
yet ſtill he is a man, joined with us in the ſociety, and commu
nion of the ſame nature, and partaking of the image and ſuper
inſcription of our heavenly Father; and we paint our enem
then in wrong colours, when we think him capable of affordin
us no benefit at all; ſince [o] by him we may be admoniſhed
our faults, which our friends perhaps would be ſhy of mentio
ing, and too tender in reproving: by him, and the fear of h
cenſures, reſtrained from thoſe liberties, which, if we had take
might have proved a ſnare and temptation to us: and by hi
and his injuries, have an opportunity given us of improving o
faith and patience, and thereby of increaſing our future happ
neſs. In him indeed there is no ſuch intention, and all that h
does is in pure hoſtility againſt us; but ſtill we are to conſid
him as an inſtrument in God's hand, without whoſe appointme
or permiſſion nothing can befal us, and, conſequently, not faſt
our eyes with indignation upon him, but have always an awf
regard to the divine providence that employs him; [p] and up
this conſideration it was that David ſuppreſſed all impatient a
reſentive thoughts, when he was ſadly reviled, and treated wi
indignity by Shimei. He had thoſe about him, no doubt, th
were ready enough to be the executioners of his revenge; b
all that he had to ſay was; [q] let him curſe; for the Lord ha
bidden him: who ſhall then ſay, Wherefore haſt thou done ſ

1. From the conſideration of our enemy.

THE

m Horneck's Sermons, Vol. II. n Barrow's Works, Vol. I. o Blackha
Sermons, Vol. I. p Moſs's Sermons. q 2 Sam. xvi. 10, 11.

THIS enemy of ours perhaps, at preſent, may create us ſome neaſineſs, yet who knows, but that in time, he may become what reconciled enemies uſually are) one of our beſt friends, nd the matter of our joy and conſolation? And to bring about his event, what can we imagine ſo prevalent, as a continual oing of kind and good offices to thoſe that bear us ill-will? For if, to ſee an injured perſon, when inſulted by outrageous ma-ce, not only patient in bearing it, but quietly paſſing by all ther methods of revenge, beſide that of a generous contempt; ſuch a ſurpriſing ſight as this, I ſay, cannot but fill, even him hat does the injury, with ſecret ſhame and confuſion, what ope-ation may it not be expected to have, when the ſame innocent nd injured perſon, not contented only to forbear and forgive, pur-ues his very perſecutor with courteſy and kindneſs, and endea-ours to reduce him by all ſeaſonable good offices, and by all the vertures of reconciliation, and invitations to friendſhip, that e can think of? Such reſolved goodneſs, without diſpute, muſt e enough to ſubdue the moſt obſtinate ill-nature, and can hardly ail of the effect, whereof the apoſtle gives us this aſſurance; if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirſt, give him rink; for, in ſo doing, [t] thou ſhalt heap coals of fire on is head.—Coals, that when once they come to touch the heart, vill melt him down, be he made of never ſo ſtubborn metal, nto eaſineſs and compliance, refine him from all his unſociable aſſions, and fit him for your familiarity and friendſhip.

BUT if this event ſhould not follow, nay, if even we are aſſured before-hand, that the malice our enemy bears us, is ſo ettled and implacable, that no love or kindneſs on our part can work upon his temper, and regain his friendſhip; yet, herein is he great advantage of this duty, that, in loving our enemies, we really exerciſe and expreſs our love to ourſelves: by loving n enemy, notwithſtanding his hatred to me, I free my mind of hoſe boiſterous paſſions of anger, hatred, and revenge, which put the ſpirits into an unnatural fermentation and tumult. By not being eaſily provoked, I blunt the edge of the weapon wherewith he ſeeks to hurt me; and by returning good for vil, I have it in my power ſufficiently, though innocently, to e revenged of him. I can make his very eyes ſore, to ſee ſo nuch goodneſs in one that he hates; I can gall and vex him to the eart, by a generous return to an unworthy provocation; and, n ſhort, can ſhame and confound him quite, by ſhewing my-elf to be, in all the contention between us, much the better, nd the wiſer, and the greater man of the two.

2. The nature of the duty.

AND now, [u] what a pleaſing proſpect muſt it be to the meek, he humble, and the patient ſoul, whenever an enemy approaches, to

r Moſs's Sermons. s Rom. xii. 20. t The metaphor is taken from the me-nod uſed by artificers in metals, who when they meet with any too hard to be iſſolved by putting fire under them take and pour live coals upon them, and y that means, bring them to their purpoſe. Hammond, in Locum. u Moſs, ibid.

to perceive himſelf placed, as it were, in eminence above hi
and that he is ſtill able to keep himſelf quiet and undiſturbe
notwithſtanding all the rude attacks that can be made upon hi
nay, to perceive, that, without any outward force or violen
without ſtriking a ſingle ſtroke, or ſaying one word, he can m
ſweetly, and innocently be revenged, only by continuing firm
his duty? Nor can it but enhance this pleaſure, to concei
ſome probable hopes of vanquiſhing the ſturdieſt oppoſition
an enemy, by pure dint of courteſy and kindneſs; and, like
great and wiſe general (as [x] one fitly compares it) by art a
ſtratagem, by ſkill and conduct, by patience and wiſe delay,
make an end of the war, without ever putting it to the haza
of a battle.

3. The example of God.

By our Lord's authority, we may venture to carry t
practice of this duty to a ſtill higher pitch of commendatio
[y] For, as love for love is but juſtice and gratitude, and love f
no love favour and kindneſs; ſo love for hatred and enmity
a moſt divine temper, and that whereby we [z] become the childr
of our Father, which is in heaven: for he maketh his ſun
riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the ju
and on the unjuſt, [a] Who then can think it beneath him
paſs by an injury, or to put up an affront, when he ſees th
God, the ſovereign Creator and Lord of all things, wh
power no creature is able to reſiſt, does nevertheleſs ſpare a
preſerve us (vile worms, and ſinful duſt and aſhes) who pr
voke him every day, and, by our continual abuſe of his forbe
ance, and long-ſuffering, call for the ſevereſt vengeance up
us? Who can think it unbecoming his dignity or greatneſs, ev
to buy his peace with his neighbour, who has done him wro
by doing him, as he has opportunity, all offices of goodneſs a
kindneſs, when he has before him the example of God himſe
intreating us to be reconciled to him, and notwithſtanding
manifold provocations, deſirous to purchaſe our friendſhip at a
rate: when we have the example of the Son of God, our cr
fied Saviour, [b] who did no ſin, neither was guile found in
mouth; and yet, when he was reviled, reviled not again; wh
he ſuffered, he threatened not: when we have the example
his glorious company of apoſtles, who, in all things [c] approv
themſelves as the miniſters of Chriſt, and his faithful followe
in honour and diſhonour, by evil report and good report, as
ceivers, and yet true; when we have the example of his chur
in the beſt ages, who, as Juſtin Martyr tells the Jews, [d] pra
for them, and all others, that were unjuſtly their enemies,
repenting of their wickedneſs, and ceaſing to blaſpheme Ch
Jeſus, they might, together with chriſtians, be ſaved by h

x Barrow. y Archbiſhop Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. I. z Matth. v
a Blackhall's Sermons, Vol. I. b 1 Pet. ii. 22. c 2 Cor. vi. 4, 8. d C
Primitive Chriſtianity.

at his ſecond glorious coming: when we have his gracious promiſe of a recompence to be made us, for all that we ſuffer upon this ſcore; for [e] bleſſed are ye, when men ſhall revile you; and perſecute you, and ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſely for my ſake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: and laſtly, when we have his ſevere commi-nations, that without forgiving our enemies we can have no remiſſion of our own tranſgreſſions; for, [f] if he that is but fleſh (as the ſon of Syrach obſerves) nouriſheth hatred, who ſhall intreat for pardon of his ſins? And therefore he conclud-eth; Remember thy end, and let enmity ceaſe: remember cor-ruption, and death, and abide in the commandments: remember the commandments, and bear no malice to thy neighbour: re-member the covenant of the moſt High, and wink at ignorance.

SECT. I.

Of Juſtice in General.

JUSTICE is that virtue which is concerned in the obſervance of thoſe laws, whether human or divine, which reſpect the ſeveral rights of men, whether natural or acquired.

Juſtice, what. And the ſe-veral kinds of it.

1. THE natural rights of men are thoſe which appertain to them, as rational creatures, dwelling in mortal bodies, joined to-gether in mutual relations and united in one common ſociety. Theſe are rights inherent in them, antecedently to all human conſtitutions, and what they may juſtly claim of one another, as eternal dues, which no laws can cancel, no cuſtom diſſolve, no circumſtances make void or abrogate. [g] To do juſtly then, with reſpect to this kind of rights, is to render to every man what we are indebted to him by the obligation of nature; as he is a rational creature, to treat him equitably, and to do him all the good we can juſtly deſire he ſhould do to us, if we were in his circumſtances; quietly to permit him to judge for himſelf, with-out endeavouring to tyrannize over his conſcience by perſecut-ing, cenſuring, and reviling him, becauſe he is not of our opinion; freely to ſuffer him to comply with the dictates of right reaſon, and not to put him, by any kind of violence or neceſſity, upon any wicked or diſhonourable act; and, in a word, to pay him all thoſe fair reſpects, and inſtances of courteſy, that are due to the dignity of human nature. Theſe are debts which every rational creature owes to his own kind, and which we cannot with-hold from one another, without manifeſt injuſtice to human nature: but then, as we are rational creatures, inhabiting theſe mortal bodies, we are obliged in juſtice not to maim, or deſtroy, or captivate another man's body, unleſs it be in the neceſſary de-fence of our own lives, eſtates, or liberties; not to deprive him of his neceſſary livelihood and ſubſiſtence, but out of our abun-

1. With re-lation to our natural rights.

[e] Matth. v. 11, 12. [f] Eccleſ. xxviii. 5, &c. [g] Scott's Chriſtian Life, Part III.

dance (if we be rich and he poor) to ſupply his pinching neceſſities. Theſe things we owe to one another, as we are all the tenants of God, ſent down into this lower world, and quartered in theſe houſes of clay. And ſo again, as we are rational creatures, joined together by natural relations, we are obliged to pay each other all thoſe reſpects and duties which the nature of our relation calls for; as we are parents, to love, and inſtruct and make ſuitable proviſion for our children; and, as we are children, to love, and reverence, to ſuccour, and obey our parents; and ſo in all other relations. Once again, as we are rational creatures, united in one common ſociety, we owe love and peace, truth and credit, protection and participation of profit to our fellow-members; and when, inſtead of theſe, we hate and malign, we vex and diſturb one another; when we lie, and equivocate, and violate our promiſes and oaths; when we are negligent and prodigal of each others lives, eſtates, and reputations, and uſurp to ourſelves all the profit of our mutual intercourſe, we then deſtroy the natural rights of human ſociety, and demean ourſelves as open enemies to mankind.

Our acquired right.

2. THE acquired rights of men are ſuch as ariſe from their ſacred and civil relations, from their legal poſſeſſions, their perſonal accompliſhments, their outward rank and quality, and the like; of which we intend to diſcourſe ſomewhat more diſtinctly, after we have conſidered, 1. Our obligation to juſtice in general; and, 2. The rule and motives that may engage our practice of it.

Our obligation to juſtice.

I. THAT there is a ſecret inclination, or impreſſion upon the minds of men, whereby they are naturally carried to approve ſome things, as good and fit, and to diſlike other things, as having a native evil and deformity in them; and that by theſe natural inclinations and impreſſions, the great lines of our duty may be traced out, a man needs but conſult the oracle of his own breaſt to be ſatisfied. That to be juſt in our dealings, true in our truſts, faithful in our promiſes, and in all things to do to others, as we would they ſhould do unto us, are actions eternally good, and fitted to the genuine propenſions of our nature; as on the contrary, to be falſe and perfidious in our words or deeds to injure the innocent, or oppreſs the impotent, or defraud the ignorant, are actions eternally evil, and abhorrent to our natural and undepraved notions, is viſible from the glory and appearance which is known to attend the one, and the ſhame and confuſion which uſually accompanies the other; for glory and ſhame are nothing elſe but an appeal to the judgment of others, concerning the good or evil of our actions.

From the dictates of our nature.

From the nature of God.

AND, as by our natural propenſions we are called upon to the practice of all manner of juſtice, ſo are we no leſs obliged to perform it, in conformity to the nature, in ſubmiſſion to the providence, and in obedience to the will of our great Creator

s God, by the infinite ſelf-ſufficiency of his nature, is ſecured om all temptation to injuſtice, ſo by the infinite goodneſs of it, e ſtands unvariably bent and inclined to deal juſtly and righte-uſly by his creatures, never to with-hold from them any right, ever to afflict them beyond their demerit; and therefore the oyal Pſalmiſt makes his acknowledgment; [f] Righteous art hou, O Lord, and upright art thy judgments; even as the even angels in the ſong of the Lamb, declare, Great and mar-ellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, juſt and true are hy way, thou King of ſaints. Since then the nature of God is he great exemplar and pattern of all reaſonable natures, as be-ng in itſelf the moſt perfectly reaſonable, whatever is imitable n it, that we are obliged to tranſcribe into our own; and, con-equently, ſince he is eternally juſt, we are obliged to be juſt kewiſe. For indeed, conſidering that God, as the ſupreme Lord and proprietor of all things, has an eternal right to ſhare is own goods among his own creatures, as he pleaſes, to de-rive another man of what his providence has allotted him, be-ides the injury done the perſon, is a direct oppoſition to the ivine ordination and appointment; a ſetting ourſelves up to arve for ourſelves out of thoſe allowances that he has diſtribut-d to others, and living in open rebellion to his wiſe government. Well therefore might the word of God teach and admoniſh us, hat denying ungodlineſs, and worldly luſt, we ſhould live ſo-erly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world; that in all ur dealings, we ſhould maintain a conſcience void of offence, ot going beyond, or defrauding one another; but in every hing, dealing with other men, as we would they ſhould eal with us: for [g] he hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good; nd what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, and o love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? What doth he Lord require of thee? All thy other works and perfor-nances, thy coming before him with burnt-offerings, with alves of a year old; thy bringing to his altar thouſands of ams, and ten thouſand rivers of oil; nay, thy giving thy firſt-orn for thy tranſgreſſion, the fruit of thy body for the ſin of hy ſoul will avail thee nothing: [h] So long as thou art a tranſ-greſſor of the eternal rules of righteouſneſs, whatever thy wor-hip, whatever thy form of religion be, it will never recommend hee to the favour of that God who loves juſtice more than ſacri-ce, and the integrity of thy dealings, more than all the ſolem-ity of thy other ſervices. And ſo we proceed,

His providence.

His revealed will.

II. To ſtate the meaſure, and inforce the motives of this uty. It is reported of Alexander Severus, the Roman em-eror, that he had ſo great an eſteem for our bleſſed Saviour, pon account of his being the author of this one ſentence,

The rule or meaſure of this duty.

[i] All

[f] Pſal. cxix. 137. [g] Micah. vi. 8, &c. [h] Cave's Primitive Chriſtianity.

[i] All things, whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, do you even ſo to them, that he was once minded to have built him a temple, and received him into the number of the heathen gods. And well might the emperor have ſo good an opinion of its author, ſince this, of all others, is a rule ſo plain and clear, ſo near at hand, and accommodated to all the common caſes of human life, that nothing more excellent can be deviſed for the regulation of our intercourſe with one another; only there may be ſome doubt concerning the extent of the matter contained in it, which we will firſt endeavour to explain, and then ſhew the manifold uſefulneſs of it.

The limitation of this rule.

NOW though this rule be of excellent uſe towards the direction of our behaviour in general, yet there are ſeveral caſes wherein it will not hold; wherein we are obliged not to grant that to others which we ourſelves perhaps, were we in their circumſtances, and they in ours, might be willing enough, and reaſonably willing, to obtain from them. [k] A benefactor, for inſtance, is not bound to comply with the demands of ſuch as aſk unmerited favours, though conſcious that he himſelf might be apt to make us extravagant requeſts, were it his turn to be the object of another man's beneficence: nor is a magiſtrate at liberty, much leſs under an obligation, to turn the edge of juſtice from an importunate offender, becauſe, if he himſelf were the criminal, he ſhould certainly, and equally deſire to eſcape unpuniſhed. The rule therefore which makes what we deſire of other men the meaſure of our dealings toward them, is to be underſtood, not of vicious or exceſſive deſires, but of ſuch only as are fit and reaſonable; ſuch requeſts, as we can in our calmeſt thoughts, juſtify to ourſelves; ſuch, as we are ſure may be made with decency, and cannot be refuſed without inhumanity.

The excellency of it.

THIS is the neceſſary limitation of the rule: and were it but duly obſerved, the ſeller would not take advantage of the ignorance of the buyer, nor the buyer make an advantage of the neceſſity of the ſeller; becauſe his own conſcience would tell him that if he were the buyer, and another ſhould take ſuch advantage of his ignorance, if he were the ſeller, and another ſhould make ſuch advantage of his neceſſity, he ſhould have reaſon enough to complain of his being cheated, or oppreſſed. [l] If this rule were duly obſerved, the borrower would reckon himſelf ſtrictly bound to reſtore what was lent him, in due time, and the lender would be far from exacting any extravagant conditions for the loan of his money or goods, becauſe he knows that when he lends, he expects the borrower to be punctual, and when himſelf is forced to borrow, he ſhould be very loth to fall into the hands of an extortioner. Were this rule well remembered

i Matth. vii. 12. k Atterbury's Sermons, Vol. I. l Blackhall's Sermons, Vol. II.

remembered and obſerved, there would be no need of ever binding men in obligations, or ſuing them at law to perform their bargains, or execute their truſts; becauſe whoever ſtrikes a bargain, or accepts a truſt, cannot but know what we would account another, that ſhould falſify in either of theſe particulars, and therefore ſhould he himſelf do ſo, he muſt be convicted, and condemned by his own conſcience. In fine (for to run through all particulars would be endleſs) who is there that does not call that man a knave, or an unjuſt perſon, who robs him, who cheats him, who keeps from him his own, or who any ways abuſes him in word or deed? Every man has a quick ſenſe, and is ready to make loud complaints of the injuries and affronts that are put upon him; and therefore, if he would but make another man's caſe his own, he would have the ſame reſentment of the injuries that are done to another, and, conſequently, be reſtrained from doing any himſelf.

Motives to the practice of juſtice. From its obviouſneſs.

[m] THIS commandment (ſays Moſes, to engage the people to the obſervance of the moral law) is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou ſhouldeſt ſay, Who ſhall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the ſea, that thou ſhouldeſt ſay, Who ſhall go over the ſea for us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayeſt do it: and if this might be ſaid of the law in general, much more is it true of thoſe eternal rules of righteouſneſs which lie open to common uſe, are obvious to all ſizes of apprehenſion, and ready at all times for preſent application. The greater therefore, and more inexcuſeable muſt the violation of theſe precepts be, ſince, [n] however other ſins may be excuſed by our ignorance, and, in ſome meaſure, alleviated upon account of the natural defects of our underſtanding, this can admit of no cloak, or extenuation; becauſe, whenever a man deals unjuſtly by another, his conſcience (if he puts but the queſtion to his conſcience) will be ſure to tell him that he would not be ſo dealt with, were the caſe and circumſtances his own; and therefore, if he reſolves to deal unjuſtly, notwithſtanding ſuch conviction, he can claim no indulgence, deſerves no pity, and can pretend to no mitigation of his ſtripes, ſince he knew his Maſter's will, and did it not.

From the unprofitableneſs,

IT may be conſidered farther, that, however the unjuſt man may make profit and advantage his ultimate end, yet, one way or other, he is generally diſappointed; becauſe how ſecretly ſoever he may carry on his myſtery, yet it will not be long before ſome unforeſeen accident will draw the curtain, and bring to light the fraud and villany which he practiſes behind it; and when theſe are once detected, farewel credit and reputation

m Deut. xxx. 11, &c. n Scott's Chriſtian Life.

tation for ever. The man that has ſuffered by his diſhoneſty, either out of charity to others, or out of reſentment of the injury, will divulge his knavery, and caution others againſt him; and what expectance can he then have of thriving in his trade or calling, when his houſe becomes haunted, as it were, and his frauds and cozenages appear like ſpectres at his door, to frighten all men from his converſation? But ſuppoſe the beſt, and (what ſometimes comes to paſs) that the man thrives, and grows great in the world by his frauds and injuſtice; yet alas! what comfort can he take in his ill-gotten wealth, when every part of it throws guilt in his face, and awakens ſome dire reflection in his conſcience? By a continued tumult of exceſs and riot he may make a ſhift perhaps to drown theſe remonſtrances; but in all probability, when death, in ſome diſeaſe or other, begins to approach him, and to place him within the ſight of a dreadful eternity, his conſcience will then begin to rouſe and awake, and raiſe an hideous outcry againſt him. And what a wretched and deplorable condition muſt he then be in, when his laſt will and teſtament ſets before him a woeful catalogue of uncancelled guilts, and every ill-gotten penny, puts him in mind of his approaching damnation? Under theſe circumſtances, he has but theſe two things to chuſe, either to refund his unjuſt acquiſitions, or to venture to periſh eternally for them. If his reſolution is to live and die with the ſpoils of his injuſtice about him, he thereby expoſes himſelf to the wrath of God, which is revealed from heaven againſt all unrighteouſneſs of men, and ſurrenders his immortal ſoul, which the gain of the whole world can never compenſate to the pangs and agonies of everlaſting death. But if he is not ſo deſperate as to intend this, he muſt then make reſtitution of what he hath wrongfully taken from his neighbour, and in doing ſo, perhaps ſtrip himſelf of all. And now, [o] what folly and madneſs is this, for a man to take a great deal of pains, only to create himſelf more trouble and vexation? To ſpin a thread, which he knows himſelf muſt unravel? And to load and cumber himſelf, as it were, with bringing home to his own houſe his neighbour's goods, which he muſt afterwards carry back again upon his own ſhoulders, and when that is done leave his own houſe more naked and unfurniſhed than it was at firſt? He certainly is the wiſer, as well as the honeſter man, wiſer, I ſay, for this world, as well as the next, who, though he has but little, can call that little his own, as being the fruit of God's bleſſing upon his honeſt induſtry, and may therefore (as the primitive manner was) [p] eat his meat with gladneſs, and ſingleneſs of heart, praiſing God, and having favour with all the people.

uneaſineſs,

deſperateneſs,

and folly of injuſtice.

SECT

[o] Blackhall's Sermons, Vol. I. [p] Acts ii. 46, 47.

SECT II.

Of Relative Juſtice.

BESIDES the general juſtice which is common to all men, there is a ſpecial kind of juſtice, ariſing from the reſpects and relations wherein we ſtand, as ſuperiors and inferiors, to each other. Now ſuperiors, with their reſpective inferiors, are ſuch either with regard to their authority or their excellency. 1. Superiors in authority are thoſe who by God's ordinance have power over us, and a right to rule and govern us; and theſe are either in the ſtate, in the church, or in private families. In the ſtate the ſuperiors are the princes or chief magiſtrates, who are the ſecular fathers of the country, and God's vicegerents in it. In the church they are the miniſters of the goſpel, who are the ſpiritual fathers of the people committed to their charge. In a family they and their reſpective inferiors are huſband and wife, parents and children, maſters and ſervants. 2. Superiors in excellency are ſuch as ſurpaſs others either in the gifts of the mind, or in wealth and honour, or in beneficence and liberality, &c. and our purpoſe muſt be to ſhew what are the ſeveral rights that theſe men may claim, and conſequently what are the duties that interfere between the prince and ſubject, the paſtor and people, [q] parents and children, the huſband and wife, the maſter and ſervant, friend and friend; between ſuperiors in rank and riches, in parts and abilities, and their reſpective inferiors. Different kinds of it.

1. Between Prince and Subject.

WHOEVER will give himſelf pains to reflect upon the ſtate and condition of things in this world, and to conſider how much ſtronger influence mens paſſions have over them than their reaſon, may ſoon be convinced of the neceſſity of government to the peace and happineſs of it. We may perceive, by the injuſtice and wickedneſs that is done every day, in defiance of law and puniſhment, what mankind would be if theſe reſtraints were withdrawn, and will and pleaſure were the ſole principle of every one's actions. It is of happy deſign therefore that God has appointed governing powers in the world, for the ſupport and comfort of human ſociety, [r] to be his miniſters to us for good, and revengers to execute wrath upon him that doth evil. [s] But then theſe governors are not to look upon themſelves as perſons exalted by the immediate direction of heaven to an height above other mortals, merely to be The reaſons of government.

[q] The duties relating to parents and children, we have ſufficiently treated of in our expoſition of the fifth commandment. [r] Rom. xiii. 4. [s] Hoadly's Sermons.

The duty of princes both in ſecular and ſpiritual affairs.

be arbitrators, at their own pleaſure, of the lives and fortune of their fellow-creatures; but as perſons [t] called by the providence of God to a difficult and laborious taſk; not to live in eaſe and delicacy, but to watch day and night for the good of that ſociety in which they preſide; to be diſtinguiſhed indeed from others by the enſigns of greatneſs and authority, but this only to make them more capable of ſerving the public and conſulting the intereſt of all their ſubjects, in their endeavouring by all proper means to promote the honour and intereſt of true religion, but without uſurping an authority over other men's conſciences; in their taking care to have the laws duly executed, and yet that execution tempered with all the lenity and goodneſs that may be conſiſtent with the public ſafety; in protecting their ſubjects againſt all outward violence, and providing them ſuch things as are neceſſary for the relief of their wants; and in encouraging and promoting perſons of merit and probity, and making them the more peculiar objects of their favour and confidence.

In the language of ſcripture, [u] kings and queens are called the nurſing fathers and nurſing mothers of their people; * and the terms (in what ſenſe ſoever we take them, whether for natural parents or for ſuch as ſupply their place in the care and tuition of children, viz. guardians and nurſes) do certainly imply a wonderful truſt repoſed in princes, and a wonderful care, ſollicitude and tenderneſs required of them with relation to thoſe that are committed to them. As therefore they are nurſing fathers, they are to ſecure and promote the temporal peace and happineſs of their ſubjects; and, accordingly, ſhould think themſelves obliged to look into the affairs of the kingdom with their own eyes, and to ſee that all magiſtrates under them do their duty in their reſpective ſtations and offices; to take care that their favourites encroach not upon them, or make uſe of the credit they have with them, for the oppreſſion of the meaneſt of the people; and to provide that impartial juſtice be adminiſtred to all; but juſtice (as we ſaid before) that is tempered with mercy, becauſe they ſhould remember that [x] their thrones ſhould be upholden by mercy. And as they are nurſing fathers, with a more immediate regard to the church of God, their buſineſs muſt be to maintain and defend the true religion; to encourage piety and virtue; to oppoſe and diſcountenance all atheiſm and infidelity, all ſchiſms and hereſies, and all vice and wickedneſs, and impiety of what kind ſoever; to uſe their utmoſt endeavours to make all their ſubjects good men and good chriſtians; and in order to this, not only to be exemplary themſelves in piety and devotion, in temperance and moderation, and all other virtues; but to take ſpecial care that godlineſs

t Plutarch makes this to be the character of a king: *Hyperetoon Theoo pros anthroopoon epimeleian kai ſuoterian*, God's miniſter or ſervant for the good and welfare of mankind. u Iſa. xlix. 23. * Sharp's Sermons. x Prov. xx. 28.

godlineſs be not defamed, and the ways of truth evil ſpoken of, by reaſon either of the ill lives or ill principles of thoſe that encompaſs the throne: for this was holy David's reſolution, and the meaſure he deſigned to follow in his government, when God had advanced him to the kingdom of Iſrael; [y] I will walk in my houſe in a perfect heart: I will take no wicked thing in hand: I hate the works of the unfaithful; no ſuch ſhall cleave unto me. A froward heart ſhall depart from me: I will not know a wicked perſon; but mine eyes ſhall look upon ſuch as are faithful in the land, and whoſo leadeth a godly life, he ſhall be my ſervant: for † take away the wicked from before the king (ſays his wiſe ſon Solomon) and his throne ſhall be eſtabliſhed in righteouſneſs.

To be ſhort, as ſovereign power was ordained by God for a public good to guard and defend the innocent, to ſhelter and relieve the oppreſſed, to fence and propagate true religion, and adjuſt and balance private rights and intereſts, every ſubject has a claim to be protected by it (ſo far as it is able) in his perſon and legal rights, in his juſt liberties and privileges, and in the profeſſion and exerciſe of God's true religion; and the prince who, being inveſted with ſovereign power for this purpoſe, either betrays, oppreſſes, or any way enſlaves his ſubjects himſelf, or out of negligence or malice permits others to do it, is an injurious invader of their rights and properties, and though not accountable to any human authority, ſhall one day anſwer for it at the tribunal of God.

The duty of ſubjects.

AND on the other hand, as kings are God's vicegerents here on earth, and reign by his authority, they have a right to be obeyed in all things wherein they do not interfere with the commands of God. As they are the repreſentatives of his power and majeſty, they have a right to be honoured and reverenced by their ſubjects: and, as they were ſubſtituted by him to maintain the public weal, and to guard the properties of the people, they have certainly a right to be aided and aſſiſted by them; [z] for they are God's miniſters, ſays St Paul, attending continually upon this very thing; render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; cuſtom to whom cuſtom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

To honour and eſteem their governors.

[a] SOVEREIGN princes and ſtates are the chief inſtruments which the providence of God employs in his adminiſtrations here below: to them is intruſted the execution of all laws; and laws, we know, are the ſource of every advantage that redounds to mankind from ſociety. Even ill princes cannot help doing a great deal of good by preſerving ſome degree of order and government in the world; but when virtue aſcends the throne, it diſpenſes bleſſings without number and without meaſure. See-

y Pſal. ci. 2, 3, &c. † Prov. xxv. 5. z Rom. xiii. 6, 7. a Biſhop Atterbury's Sermons, Vol. I.

ing therefore, that by the adminiſtration of our [b] princes, w enjoy great quietneſs, and many worthy deeds are done to th nation by their care and providence; it is certainly our duty t accept it always, and in all places, with all thankfulneſs; and in ſtead of cenſuring and reviling, to eſteem them highly in love for their works ſake.

CHRISTIAN charity and beneficence is certainly a debt whic we owe to kings, as well as the meaneſt of their ſubjects; bu how ſhall we extend our good offices to thoſe who move in ſ high a ſphere? How, but by entertaining a ſincere eſteem fo their perſons, and a good opinion of their adminiſtrations; b concealing their faults and commending their virtues; by ſilen cing the clamours and ſuppreſſing the jealouſies, which proud and envious, and ſelf-deſigning men are too apt to propagate theſe, together with our hearty prayer to God for their pro ſperity and preſervation, are the only compenſation or retur which moſt of us are capable of making them for their vigilanc and concern for the public ſafety; the pains which they take and the hazards which they run to ſecure it.

Not to cenſure or revile them,

[c] MOST men indeed, by their condition of life, are ſet at to great a diſtance from the ſprings of government, to be rightl inſtructed in facts and circumſtances, and much leſs to enter int the reaſon and foundation of public councils; and therefore fo ſuch to cenſure the conduct of their ſuperiors, is talking with out knowledge, and judging without examination. And ever thoſe who are placed in higher ſtations, and have a nearer view of the public management, cannot but know what a large an weighty taſk the concerns of the public are; how many difficul ties ariſe, which the wiſeſt councils cannot foreſee, nor th greateſt diligence ſurmount: and hereupon they ſhould be ſ far from being the firſt in cenſuring and accuſing the public con duct, that they ought in reaſon and equity to be the correctors of others, whoſe ignorance in theſe matters ſhall at any time betray them into too great freedom and ſeverity.

WHEN St Paul, ſtanding before the council of the Jews, made a ſolemn profeſſion of his innocence, and that he had walked in all good conſcience before God, even until that day; the declaration was thought an inſolent boaſt, and offended the high-prieſt to that degree that he commanded him to be ſmitten on the mouth. Provoked at this opprobrious uſage, the apoſtle indeed charges him with hypocriſy, in ſitting there to judge him after the law, and yet commanding him to be ſmitten contrary to the law: and though the groſſneſs of the affront he received might juſtify the ſeverity of this charge, yet, when he is put in mind that it was the ſupreme magiſtrate of whom he had ſaid this, ſo far was he from vindicating, that he preſently revoked it, and condemned himſelf for it. [d] I wiſt not, brethren, that he

[b] Acts xxiv. 2, 3. [c] Biſhop Gibſon's Sermons. [d] Acts xxiii. 5, &c.

he was the high-prieſt; for it is written, thou ſhalt not ſpeak evil of the ruler of thy people. Inſtead of [e] deſpiſing dominion then, and ſpeaking evil of dignities; inſtead of [f] reviling the Gods, and curſing the rulers of the people, what is the advice that this ſame apoſtle gives us, equally conducive to our own happineſs and intereſt, as well as theirs? I exhort, ſays he, that, but pray firſt of all, ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, and giving of for them. thanks be made for all men, and eſpecially [g] for kings, and all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godlineſs and honeſty; for this is good and acceptable in the ſight of God our Saviour.

2. Between Paſtor and People.

THAT the miniſters of God were, at all times, a diſtinct order of men, inveſted with a peculiar character, and appointed to the office of preaching the word, adminiſtring the ſacraments, and ordaining others to ſucceed in their function, is what we had occaſion to evince [h] in another place, and ſhall now conſider them in a farther view, as they are the ſpiritual fathers of the flock of Chriſt: for that there is ſuch a relation between them and their reſpective congregations, St Paul has more than intimated, when he tells the Corinthians that [i] though they might have ten thouſand inſtructors in Chriſt, yet had they not many fathers, none indeed beſides himſelf; for in Chriſt Jeſus, ſays he, I have begotten you through the goſpel.

St PAUL, being about to take his leave of the church of Ephe- The paſ-
ſus, ſends for the elders that preſided therein, and gives them tor's duty.
his injunction; [k] take heed unto yourſelves, and all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghoſt has made you overſeers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood; for I know this, that after my departing, ſhall grievous wolves enter in among you, not ſparing the flock; and alſo of yourſelves ſhall men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things, to draw away diſciples after them; and therefore watch. In his canonical epiſtles to Timothy, he abounds with ſuch exhortations as theſe; [l] Take heed unto thyſelf and unto thy doctrine: continue in them; for in doing this thou ſhalt both ſave thyſelf, and them that hear thee: [m] ſtudy, therefore, to ſhew thyſelf approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly

e Jude ver. 8. f Exod. xxii 28. g That the primitive chriſtians, in obedience to this advice of the apoſtle, prayed devoutly for their governors, we may learn more eſpecially from Tertullian's apology, where, in ſeveral places he tells us, that they conſtantly prayed for the emperors, and their miniſters, the ſecular ſtate, and repoſe of the realm. Precamur pro omnibus imperatoribus, ſays he, vitam illis prolixam, imperium ſecurum, domum tutum, exercitus fortes, ſenatum fidelem populum probum, orbem quietum, &c. Cave's primitive Chriſtianity. h See p. 121, and 139. i 1 Cor. iv. 15. k Acts xx. 28, &c. l 1 Tim. iv. 16. m 2 Tim. ii. 15.

rightly dividing the word of truth. [n] Preach the word; b
inſtant in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon; reprove, rebuke, exho
with all long-ſuffering, and doctrine; and [o] be thou an examp
of the believers in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpiri
in faith, in purity; and, to complete the duty of God's clergy
St Peter's exhortation runs thus; [p] feed the flock of Go
which is among you, taking the overſight thereof, not by co
ſtraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind
neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being enſample
to the flock; and when the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, ye ſha
receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away: for [q] the
that be wiſe, ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament
and they that turn many to righteouſneſs, as the ſtars for eve
and ever.

THESE are ſome of the lines wherein the ſpirit of God ha
drawn the paſtoral care and duty, by which he reminds ever
one that has undertaken the ſacred function, that he ought t
preach ſuch ſound doctrine as may not be reproved, and in
manner adapted to the capacities of his hearers; that he ſhoul
guard them againſt ſuch errors in opinion and practice, as ar
contrary to the principles and rules of the goſpel; that he ſhoul
be very diligent and induſtrious in his calling; [r] in inſtructin
the ignorant, in reproving the wicked, in exhorting the negl
gent, in ſtrengthening the weak, in viſiting the ſick, in com
forting the afflicted, in confirming thoſe that ſtand, and reducin
thoſe that err; that he ſhould execute this office freely an
willingly, not ſo much for the ſecular advantage and emolu
ments of it, as for the ſpiritual good and ſalvation of thoſe ſou
that are committed to his truſt; and above all, that he ſhoul
be blameleſs himſelf, and, in his own perſon, ſhew the peopl
an example of religious behaviour, recommending them daily t
God's care and protection, and [s] always, without ceaſing, mak
ing mention of them in his prayers.

The people's duty to him

NOR is the ſcripture leſs expreſs in declaring the rights o
the church, and what the duties of the people are with regar
to their miniſters. [t] We beſeech you brethren, ſays St Paul
to know them which labour among you, and are over you i
the Lord, and admoniſh you; and to eſteem them very highl
in love for their works ſake; for [u] they are ambaſſadors fo
Chriſt, as though God did beſeech us by them, and they pra
you in Chriſt's ſtead to be reconciled to God. [*] Obey the
therefore that have the rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves
for they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give an account
that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; and [x] let hi
that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth
i

n 2 Tim iv 2. o 1 Tim. iv. 12. p 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. q Dan. xii. 3. r Lucas
Sermons, Vol. II. s Rom. i. 9. t 1 Theſſ. v. 12, 13. u 2 Cor. v. 20. *Heb
xiii. 17. x Gal. vi. 6.

all good things; for [y] as they which wait at the altar are artakers with the altar; even ſo hath the Lord ordained, that hey which preach the goſpel ſhould live by the goſpel.

THUS honour and reſpect, ſubmiſſion and obedience, an high eſteem, and a liberal maintenance, are what the people owe to heir miniſters, beſides their daily prayers to God for his bleſſing, nd ſucceſs upon their labours.

ST PAUL writing to the Epheſians, exhorts them to [z] pray lways with all prayer, and ſupplication in the ſpirit, and to watch thereunto with all perſeverance, and ſupplication, as for ll ſaints in general, ſo more particularly for himſelf; that ut- erance might be given unto him, and that he might open his outh boldly, to make known the myſtery of the goſpel: and what he requeſts for himſelf in this place, he elſewhere enjoins o be done for every one that is employed in this ſacred office: Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may ave free courſe, and that we may be delivered from unreaſon- ble and wicked men; for all men have not faith.

More eſpecially to pray for him.

[b] AND indeed, if ſpiritual knowledge, whereby we diſcern ur duty, is conveyed by the word, which God's miniſters reach, and if ſpiritual ſtrength to perform our duty, is commu- icated by thoſe ſacraments which they adminiſter; if they are ppointed by God, as guides, to direct his people in the right way to heaven; as paſtors, to feed his flock; as watchmen, to revent any danger that might ſurpriſe his church; and as ewards, to take care of thoſe of his houſehold: if ſo many and o valuable bleſſings, I ſay, are imparted to the people of God y theſe inſtruments, then will they deſerve the love of thoſe o whom their miniſtry is ſo ſerviceable; and that love will ex- reſs itſelf, as in other acts, ſo particularly in praying to God or thoſe by whom he beſtows his mercies and loving-kindneſſes nto them.

For what reaſons.

AND, if the conſideration of the advantages which God's eople reap from the miniſtry of their paſtors, engages them to ray for them out of love and gratitude; the weightineſs of heir charge, the great difficulty of executing it as they ought, nd the great peril that attends their not executing it, are no eſs powerful motives to engage all good chriſtians to pray for hem out of pity and compaſſion. The more eminent their dig- ity is, and the more beneficial their work is, if rightly per- ormed, the greater danger do thoſe, that aſſume this dignity, nd undertake this work, expoſe themſelves to, if they are guilty f any thing which may bring a blemiſh upon their ſacred func- ion, or if they do this work of the Lord deceitfully. There is ufficient reaſon therefore, that they, who are called to this unction, ſhould not only themſelves conſtantly fly unto God, for

[y] 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14. [z] Eph. vi. 18, 19. [a] 2 Theſſ. iii. 1, 2. [b] Smalridge's ermons.

for the pardon of their defects, and for a plentiful ſupply of h grace; but ſhould beſeech all good chriſtians likewiſe, to ſtriv together with them in prayer, that they, [c] who are not ſufficien of themſelves, may, by that ſufficiency, which is of God, b made able miniſters of the New Teſtament, and, in a du diſcharge of their office, ſave both themſelves, and thoſe th hear them.

3. Between Huſband and Wife.

THE rights and duties which ariſe from a married ſtate may be conſidered, either, 1. As they belong to the ma and woman promiſcuouſly; or, 2. As they more peculiarl belong to each of them, conſidered diſtinctly.

Duties common to both.

1. SINCE marriage then is a conjunction of man and woman after the moſt ſtrict and indiſſoluble manner, and for their mu tual happineſs, as long as they both ſhall live; it is moſt agree able to the nature, and abſolutely requiſite to this end of it, tha

1. Love.

they ſhould intirely love one another; becauſe it is impoſſible that where this paſſion is not ſtrong and reciprocal, either th unity ſhould be preſerved, or the happineſs attained, which i propoſed by both parties when they contract to enter into it [d] And this reflection may ſerve to diſcover to us the imprudent conduct of thoſe, who, upon motives of intereſt, or any tempo ral views whatever, marry without conſulting their inclination or perhaps, in ſome reſpects, contrary to it, and ſo involv themſelves in inconveniencies, greater than the advantage which they could propoſe are capable of balancing. [e] By thi means it comes to paſs, that many times people of great degre and rank are made miſerable, and more miſerable than their in feriors. Reſpect is generally had to nothing but birth and qua lity, but fortune and alliance, without any regard to perſon ſhape, and figure; to virtue, and good qualities, and other en dowments proper to engage and detain the affections; an hence they become ſplendidly and exemplarily unhappy, as if i were the ſport of fortune to level mankind, and, by ſome od diſaſter, or their own folly, to reduce the greateſt people to a equality of miſery and trouble with their inferiors.

THOSE therefore, that propoſe happineſs to themſelves i the conjugal ſtate, muſt be ſure to lay the foundation thereof i love; and as their love is to continue unto their lives end, mu needs be obliged to take ſuch courſes as are proper to confir and ſtrengthen it; and to avoid all manner of occaſions th may any ways impair or weaken it. Some of the antient chri ſtians would allow the wives to employ more art and coſt, i decking and adorning themſelves, than they did ſingle women becau

[c] 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. [d] Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. [e] Fleetwood's R lative Duties.

ecauſe they judged it abſolutely neceſſary to the peace and hap-
ineſs of their lives, to preſerve and ſecure to themſelves the
ffections of their huſbands: and, in like manner, huſbands
hould take more care than ordinary to continue their affections
o them; and to this end, ſhould not ſuffer errors or miſtakes,
iſcarriages or light offences, infirmities and heedleſs indiſcre-
ions, to alienate their hearts, or give them a mean opinion of
heir underſtanding or management. They who cannot bear
ith many failings and defects, and cannot make a great many
llowances, are but badly fitted for ſociety and friendſhip in ge-
eral, and much leſs for a ſociety ſo conſtant and continued as
he married ſtate requires; and therefore, if thoſe that are en-
aged therein will not conſider with themſelves the imperfec-
ons of human nature; if they will not remember their own
iſtakes and miſcarriages; if they will be unreaſonable, take
dvantages, and make ill-natured obſervations and reflections on
he follies and weakneſſes of their partners; if they will trea-
re them up in memory, and make them occaſions of diſtruſt,
nd topics of upbraiding, and unſeemly revilings; they will
uickly ſee an end of peace and quietneſs, and find their love
ool and languiſh.

2. ANOTHER duty common to huſband and wife is fidelity, 2. Fidelity
r a juſt obſervation of their engagements and ſolemn vows;
nd this is a duty ſo eſſentially neceſſary to the marriage-ſtate,
at any notorious breach and violation of it, not only invali-
ates the moſt religious contracts, and ſets the innocent party at
ll liberty, but even diſſolves the marriage-band itſelf immedi-
ely before God. It is indeed the ground and foundation of all
arriage-promiſes, and the ſuppoſition upon which all ſuch en-
gements are built; and therefore, when this ſuppoſition fails,
hen this ground and foundation of the contract and engage-
ent is removed and overturned, the contract is itſelf no longer
nding to the innocent and unoffending party. They may pro-
ed in their engagements indeed, if they pleaſe; but the tranſ-
reſſion of the other ſide ſets them at liberty, notwithſtanding
e moſt ſerious and moſt ſolemn promiſes.

AND as perfidy in this kind is the diſſolution of the band of
atrimony, ſo is it a crime of ſo deep a guilt as can never be
oned in this world, and of ſuch horrible injuſtice, as can admit
no reparation or amendment. And therefore [f] how careful
ould all married perſons be, not only to adhere ſtrictly to the
ter of their marriage-vow, ſo as never to falſify it by any
ect violation; but to forbear, as much as poſſible, all advances,
d avoid all occaſions, that may betray them into ſo heinous a
me! And to this purpoſe, the beſt and ſafeſt way will be, to
ep their heart with all diligence, ſo as to admit no foreign
linination or deſire; but if they cannot always ſhut their eyes
againſt

f Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. I.

againſt thoſe objects which are apt to affect them; if, throu inadvertency or ſurpriſe, it cannot be helped, but that ſome regular emotions muſt unavoidably ariſe in their minds, their ne and immediate care ſhould be, to repel, and, as ſoon as they ca totally to ſuppreſs them; leſt by degrees they gather ſtreng and get the dominion over them: which has poſſibly been t caſe of many perſons, who, in the firſt eſſays of their inclinatio apprehended nothing dangerous, nor deſigned any thing crimin

3. Prudent behaviour.

3. ANOTHER duty common to both, is their taking all ſuc prudent methods in their behaviour, as may remove all occ ſions of jealouſy and diſtruſt. For as all private advances t wards other perſons, by way of criminal addreſs, are highly cu pable, and to be avoided with the greateſt caution; ſo, whe they are made in an open or more undiſguiſed manner, wh they break out into indecencies too notorious to be conceale even from the offended party, this is provoking to the laſt d gree, and apt to excite a paſſion, of all others the moſt difficu to be reſtrained, and called by Solomon the Rage of a Man, thou the other ſex are ſometimes tranſported with it beyond the n ture, the mildneſs, and modeſty of their temper. And ther fore all freedoms and familiarities with others, that may gi an untoward umbrage, muſt be declined; and all diſcourſes, th may allure into ſin, rejected with abhorrence. The eye, t tongue, and the ears muſt be all kept chaſte; the garb and a parel be modeſt and unaffected; and the whole carriage hon and inoffenſive, and void of ſuſpicion, as well as blame. N are the occaſions of jealouſy and diſtruſt to be mutually avoid only in the tender point of matrimonial chaſtity; but even in others, wherein either their common, or their ſeparate intere (ſo far as they can be ſuppoſed to have any ſeparate) are co cerned. They ought, particularly, to concur in all the metho of frugality and prudent management, and, in lower life, of l bour and induſtry, towards acquiring a competent ſubſiſtence and though it be ordinarily incumbent on the huſband to have t direction of affairs relating to this end; yet, as circumſtanc ſometimes require that he ſhould commit it to the wife, ſo eve neglect, in this caſe, every extravagance, every unneceſſary e pence, wherein his concurrence is not implied, is at once a brea of truſt, and a violation of her conjugal love: for love will ways conſult the inclination and intereſt of thoſe who are t true objects of it, and regulate itſelf accordingly.

Admonition and inſtruction.

4. I MENTION but one duty more, which is mutually incu bent upon them, viz. that they ſhould promote the ſpiritu good and edification of one another, by recommending ea other to God's grace and protection in their prayers, and admoniſhing and inſtructing each other in the principles of r ligion. The buſineſs of admonition and inſtruction, by the ſ periority of his ſex, ſeems more eſpecially to belong to the ma

ut when it ſo happens (as it ſometimes does) that the woman ſuperior in all the advantages of knowledge and a good underſtanding, and that the man is either guilty of ſuch errors, r liable to ſuch dangers, as both deſerve and require admoniion, the woman is indulged the liberty of ſpeaking in ſuch a aſe: but then ſhe muſt intreat, rather than dictate, and inſiuate her advice, rather than aſſume, on any occaſion, indeed, ut eſpecially in the preſence of others, ſuch magiſterial airs, s are neither agreeable to the character of her ſex, nor the reation wherein ſhe ſtands; as are both a breach of decency, and f that neceſſary duty which diſtinctly conſidered ſhe owes to er huſband; and that is ſubjection.

II. THAT where nature has given the greateſt ſtrength and bilities, g where ſhe has made the body and the mind fitteſt to ndergo the labours and toils that are neceſſary to the being nd well-being of the world, there ſhe has deſigned the ſuperirity, can hardly be conteſted: that women, in this reſpect, e inferior to men; and how neceſſary ſoever in domeſtic affairs, ith all the uſe and education imaginable, can never be qualified r the great buſineſſes of trade and merchandize, of making ars abroad, and executing juſtice at home, is demonſtrably rtain; and therefore, ſince nature has made men neceſſary for oſe offices, ſhe has certainly made them ſuperior to ſuch as are t able to perform them: becauſe it muſt be admitted, that here people are, in other reſpects, equal, ſtrength of body, nd capacity of mind will undoubtedly make them ſuperior. nd agreeable to this ordination, have been the cuſtoms and ages of all nations, which, in ſome places, have done a maniſt injury to the ſex, by placing them in a condition not much ove ſlaves and menial ſervants; and, even in nations that ve been accounted the moſt civilized, to provide for the ſolace mankind, the continuance of the world, and the care of doeſtic affairs, has been thought the chief end of their creation.

The duty peculiar to the wife, viz. Obedience.

Proved from reaſon,

WITH good reaſon therefore might St Paul order all wives to ſubmit themſelves unto their own huſbands, as unto the ord; becauſe the huſband is the head of the wife, even as riſt is the head of the church: as therefore the church is bject unto Chriſt, ſo let the wives be to their own huſbands every thing. The apoſtle means in every thing that is innont and lawful; for it is certain that a wife owes no ſubjection her huſband againſt the laws, either of God or man. i Religon and good morals claim the firſt place in her obedience; and ough I think the laws, or rather cuſtoms of the land, are very nder to women, offending in the company of their huſbands, preſuming them under ſome kind of conſtraint; yet religion s no ſuch conſideration, but includes them all under ſin o commit any ſinful actions. Where the huſband's com-

and ſcripture.

g Fleetwood's Relative Duties. h Eph. v. 22, &c. i Fleetwood, ibid.

mands therefore are evidently contrary to any natural or reveal-
ed law of God, they must be rejected with abhorrence; where
his commands are evidently unreasonable and indiscreet, unusual
and unheard-of, unbecoming the age, the credit, the quality,
and condition of the wife, they may be passed by and omitted,
rather than despised: but where his commands have nothing
of this nature in them, and relate only to such matters as are
common and indifferent, her disobedience will be faulty, if so be
that reason and discretion, allowed-of custom, decency, and good
fame will not plead her excuse; for [k] I suffer not, says St Paul,
a woman (whose greatest [l] ornament is that of a meek and
quiet spirit) to usurp authority over the man; but to be in
silence, with all subjection: and for this he subjoins these rea-
sons; for Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was
not [first] deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was [first]
in the transgression; where he plainly intimates, that her be-
ing last in the creation, and first in the transgression, made her
altogether uncapable of ruling; since he that was first formed
must naturally have a right of dominion over all that descended
from him; and she that transgressed first, when left to her own
conduct, could never be presumed afterwards qualified for
state of independence; and therefore we find it made a part of
the sentence for her transgression, that [m] her desire should be to-
wards her husband, *i. e.* "That she should not be mistress of
"herself, nor have any desire satisfied, but what was approved
"of by her husband; that she should be wholly under his
"power and tutelage; and though he should command her
"many things that were contrary to her will and good-liking,
"yet should she not be left at her descretion whether she would
"obey." For to make this subjection a curse to her and her
posterity, it must needs be supposed to relate to things difficult
and unacceptable; such as the foolish, surly, and imperious hu-
mours of some husbands are sometimes known to impose upon
their wives.

The duty peculiar to the husband, viz. ruling with lenity,

BUT though the punishment of the one be, in some measure
the privilege of the other sex; though the wife, both by the
order of things, and the declarations of God's will, be obliged
to obey; yet ought not the husband to employ his authority
after an arbitrary and tyrannical manner, but in a way agreeable
to the nature and ends of the conjugal state, which considers
the wife as allied to him by the strongest ties of love, friendship
and common interest. Well therefore does St Paul advise
husbands, [n] not to be bitter against their wives: where the
phrase seems to be taken from the offence and disgust which
bitter things give when tasted and not liked; and the advice
—that husbands should not, by a peevish and morose, by
churlish and ill-natured carriage make themselves as uneasy as

proved from scripture.

ungrate-

k 1 Tim. ii. 12. l 1 Pet. iii. 4. m Gen. iii. 16. n Col. iii. 19.

ungrateful to their wives, as bitter things are diſtaſteful to the palate; or that they ſhould not be provoked to anger and averſion, to unkind words or actions, by any failings and imperfections of their wives, as the palate and ſtomach is provoked to diſguſt or loathing by the taſte of any thing very bitter: in a word, that they ſhould not uſe, either in deed or word, any unkindneſs or ſeverity towards them.

Bitterneſs of language cutting to a wife.

o THERE is a bitterneſs of languages, that every one underſtands, and words, that wound to the quick: but then, that which uſually gives them their edge, is the conſideration of the perſon that ſpeaks them, and the relation he ſtands in to us. The words of a ſtranger, though never ſo ſevere, affect us but little; the words of an enemy, as proceeding from malice, make no deep impreſſion: but the hard words of friends and neighbours, of acquaintance and relations, occaſion us grief and great concern. The ill uſage we receive from indifferent perſons ſtirs us to anger and indignation indeed, but it is againſt them only; whereas the ill uſage we receive at the hands of thoſe we love, occaſions pain and uneaſineſs within. It is the defeat of our expectation and deſire that hurts us moſt on theſe occaſions; we know we love, and we would be beloved; we try to oblige, and we would again be obliged in our turn; we favour and eſteem them, and would, in like manner, be favoured and eſteemed by them: but failing of theſe returns which we expected and deſired, we are the more afflicted and diſconſolate. It is upon this account that harſh words and ill uſage become ſo grievous to near relations, becauſe they are ſo little looked for and expected. The mind is full of other hopes, and ſurpriſed to find them ſo deceived; and therefore, when, inſtead of gentleneſs and patience, of affability and condeſcenſion, and every thing that can proceed from conſideration and good-nature, the wife generally meets with moroſeneſs and peeviſhneſs, with clamour and impatience, with revilings and ungenerous upbraidings; this, to ſoft and tender diſpoſitions, is a cruel uſage that is heavy on the mind, and wounds the heart moſt ſenſibly.

Reaſons for treating her kindly.

WELL therefore does the apoſtle adviſe the huſband, that, dwelling with his wife according to knowledge, he ſhould give honour unto her, as unto the weaker veſſel, *i. e.* ſhould treat her with all lenity and ſoftneſs, even as veſſels which are of a finer, but weaker contexture, are to be handled with greater caution and tenderneſs. And indeed, whoever gives himſelf time to conſider to what extraordinary difficulties and ſufferings God, by his order and appointment, has moſt unavoidably ſubjected and expoſed the women above men, as well by their own natural frame and make, as by a great many ſad, but uſual accidents; will ſee himſelf obliged, in common pity, to deal gently with them, to ſuſtain them under their infirmities, and by patience and

o Fleetwood's Relative Duties. p 1 Pet. iii. 7.

and forbearance, to endeavour to make their burden lighter. And if he conſiders farther, notwithſtanding theſe diſadvantages of what ſingular uſe and benefit a good and prudent companion in all the viciſſitudes of life is; what ſolace in health, what comfort in ſickneſs, what help in diſtreſs, what ſecurity in trouble is occaſioned by her means; and above all, what labour and hardſhips, what watchings and diſquietudes, as well as many humbling offices, ſhe is content to bear with all the chearfulneſs and delight imaginable, in bringing up the children, that are the delight of his eyes, and the ſtrength of his old age; he that conſiders this, I ſay, inſtead of taking pleaſure in oppoſing and inſulting the wife of his boſom, will find himſelf bound, in gratitude, and by the mutual pledges of their love, [q] to nouriſh and cheriſh her, even as his own fleſh.

4. Between Maſter and Servant.

AS we are many members, ſays St Paul, [r] in one body, and all members have not the ſame office, but ſome are deſigned for nobler, and others for meaner uſes, and yet all conſpire towards the preſervation, and more commodious ſupport of the whole; ſo God hath ordained, that, in the civil or political body, there ſhould be ſuch a diverſity of ſtates and conditions, that each ſupplying the neceſſities of the other, there might, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, [s] be no ſchiſm in the body, but that the members might have the ſame care one for another. This is the true reaſon, according to God's own appointment, of the different conditions of maſters and ſervants: and to give the former precedence in this matter, we ſhall, I. Conſider what in juſtice is required of them: and then, II. What in return may reaſonably be expected from the latter.

The duty of maſters to ſervants

I. St PAUL, treating of the relations wherein we ſtand towards one another, has compriſed the whole duty of maſters to their ſervants in this ſhort ſentence; [t] Maſters, give unto your ſervants that which is juſt and equal, knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter in heaven; [u] for though juſt and equal terms be of near affinity, yet may they be conſidered, as having a different ſignification, and ſo, to give that which is juſt to a ſervant, is to deal with him according to the contract and agreement that is between us; to give him what we have actually covenanted for, and what, in point of law, he may demand: but to give him what is equal, is to deal fairly, honeſtly, and kindly with him; and to give him what is his due in reaſon and conſcience although we have not formally contracted with him. So that there is this diſtinction to be made between juſtice and equity

q Eph. v. 29. r Rom. xii. 4. s 1 Cor. xii. 25. t Col. iv. 1. u Fleetwood Relative Duties.

that juſtice makes our contracts, and equity our conſciences the meaſures of our dealings with others. And accordingly,

1. In point of juſtice, every maſter is obliged to ſtand to his agreement, and give his ſervants what they have contracted for, whether it be inſtruction or wages. Inſtruction is the thing for which apprentices chiefly contract; for which they give their money, their time, and labour; and therefore (whether it be through deſign or negligence) to conceal from them that ſkill which properly belongs to them, and not to let them into that full knowledge of their buſineſs, according to the meaſure of their underſtanding and capacity, is a piece of great injuſtice, and the maſter who does this, not only breaks his covenant, and falſifies his truſt, but deceives his ſervant of what he expected, and defrauds him of the time and money that he pledged in his hand for that purpoſe. Wages are things for which common labourers and menial ſervants do contract, and for which they pay down their time and labour; and therefore a maſter may as well agree for goods with any cuſtomer, receive the price beforehand, and yet retain the goods withal, as take his ſervant's time and labour firſt, and then either deny, or retard, or curtail the payment of his appointed wages. It is a wiſe proviſion therefore which the Jewiſh law has made; * Thou ſhalt not oppreſs an hired ſervant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy ſtrangers that are in the land within thy gates. At his day thou ſhalt give him his hire, neither ſhall the ſun go down upon it; for he is poor, and ſetteth his heart upon it; leſt he cry againſt thee to the Lord, and it be ſin unto thee: for [x] behold, ſays St James, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth, and their cries have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth; who has himſelf expreſsly threatened, that [y] he will be a ſwift witneſs againſt thoſe that [z] uſe their neighbour's ſervice for nought, and oppreſs the hireling in his wages. Juſtice.

2. In point of the equity, every maſter is obliged to deal fairly, honeſtly, and kindly with his ſervants; and to give them that which is their due in reaſon and conſcience, although they have not formally contracted for it: and to this purpoſe he is to treat them with humanity and good-nature, in order to make their lives as eaſy as he can conſiſtently with the performance of their duty. All arbitrary and tyrannical power over them he is to diſclaim, and never put them upon any hardſhips but what are agreeable to the conditions of their ſervice. All his commands muſt be mercifully fitted to their ſtrength and capacity; all his reproofs expreſſed without rage or paſſion, without contumely or inſult; all his corrections (if there be neceſſity for any) inflicted with tenderneſs and compaſſion; and though he Equity.

* Deut. xxiv. 14. x James v. 4. y Mal. iii. 5. z Jer. xxii. 13.

he has a right to their whole time and labour, yet must not the tasks he sets them be so immoderate as to allow them no competent space for rest and intermission, for attendance on God's worship, and, at some proper seasons, for innocent sports and recreation; that they may, for that time, forget the infelicity of their low condition, and return to their labour with more alacrity.

ADD to this, that he is to give them good advice; set them a good example; afford them opportunities of serving God; instruct them in the rules of honesty and justice, truth and faithfulness; excite them to industry and carefulness, and encourage their diligence sometimes with an uncovenanted reward. Nor must this be his conduct to them in their health only; but even in their sickness, he is to take care that they want nothing that is fitting for their condition, and in their old age, that some competent provision be made for their comfortable support: [a] for I can hardly think, in point of equity, that long and faithful services, especially in great and opulent families, ought to be put off with the bare payment of stipulated wages, and not some additional bounty bestowed, that may contribute to the ease of an aged servant, and to bring his grey hairs with quiet to the grave.

Motives and inducements to them.

THESE are some of the chief duties which every master owes to his servants: and, in order to engage the performance of them, let him consider, that he is master of a man of the same kind with himself, who has thereupon a right to be treated with humanity, which if he does not, he is no better than a tyrant: that he is master of a man of the same civil society, and has therefore a right to equity and justice, which if he does him not, he is an oppressor: that he is master of a man who is of the same religion, and has thereupon a right to be treated religiously, which if he neglects to do, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel: and lastly, that he is the master of a man who is his fellow-servant; for they have both one common [b] Master in heaven, with whom there is no respect of persons; [c] to whom the bond and free are both alike; to whom the meanest servant is as dear as the most honourable master; by whom all shall be judged alike, and with the same impartiality; and by whom the unjust and cruel master, no less than the false and disobedient servant, shall be punished with the utmost severity. Wherefore remember that thou hast a Master in heaven, who, while he was on earth, took on him the form of a servant, not only to give us an example of his great humility and condescension, but to sanctify all conditions, and to shew the world that God looks not with man's eyes; that he regards not birth and fortune, quality and title; but that the meanest people in the

a Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. b Eph. vi. 9. c Fleetwood's Relative Duties.

the world are acceptable to him, if they obey his laws, and do his will: that it is virtue and religion only which recommend men to his favour, of which the pooreſt ſervants in the world are full as capable as the moſt rich and mighty maſters: and therefore, as he has made them partakers of the ſame grace here, and capable of the ſame glory hereafter, ſo he commands them to treat them with all the mercy and humanity that their condition requires; and therefore, [d] if thy brother, that dwelleth by thee, be waxen poor, thou ſhalt not rule over him with rigour, but ſhalt fear thy God.

The duty of ſervants to their maſters.

II. THE ſame apoſtle, that acquaints maſters with their duty, is very exact and copious in what, on the other hand, is required of ſervants. [e] Let as many ſervants, ſays he, as are under the yoke, count their own maſters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blaſphemed; and let them [f] be obedient to their maſters, and pleaſe them well in all things, not anſwering again; neither [g] with eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers, but in ſingleneſs of heart, fearing God, and as the ſervants of Chriſt, doing every thing heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men: and this they muſt do, [h] not only for the good and gentle, but alſo for the froward; becauſe this is praiſe-worthy, if a man, for conſcience toward God, endure grief, ſuffering wrongfully. From whence it appears, that honour and reverence to their maſter's perſon, expreſſed by all the external ſigns of words and actions; obedience to all his lawful commands, without diſputing; ſubmiſſion to his juſt reproofs and corrections, without murmuring; faithfulneſs in truſt, without purloining or embezzling; diligence in buſineſs, without loitering or eye-ſerving; a cautious fear of offending; an earneſt deſire of pleaſing; and a general conformity to what they know are the ſecret, as well as declared intimations of their maſter's will, are the great lines and characters of every ſervant's duty: and for their comfort and encouragement herein,

Encouragement to it.

LET it be conſidered, that how mean and miſerable ſoever a ſtate of ſervitude may be deemed, yet there are ſome ingredients in it that make it eaſy, if not deſirable. [i] Servants indeed may have more of the labours of life, but then they have leſs of the cares than other people. Their concern is only in one matter, to do the work that lies before them; whereas others have a world of things to think on. Their maſters they have only to pleaſe; but their maſters perhaps have all they deal with to court and humour. Themſelves, for the moſt part, are all they have to provide for; but their maſters have wives, children, and relations, to maintain at a great expence. Whatever public miſchiefs, whatever changes of government, whatever ſcarcity or dearneſs happen, they find but little alteration:

[d] Lev. xxv. 39, 43. [e] 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2. [f] Tit. ii. 9. [g] Col. iii. 22. [h] 1 Pet. ii. 18, 19. [i] Fleetwood's Relative Duties.

ation; they pay no rates or taxes, loſe no gainful employments, ſuffer nothing by the malice or inſolence of parties, and, in a word, feel leſs hardſhips and misfortunes than their very maſters: and yet they have their ſtately houſes and gardens to live and walk in, their fragrant flowers and rich furniture to pleaſe their ſmell and ſight, without ever conſidering what they coſt.

THESE are conveniencies that generally attend ſervants of the loweſt condition: but then it muſt be conſidered, that an honeſt and faithful diſcharge of their duty will gain them the favour and eſteem of all people; will make their ſervice uſeful and acceptable, and, conſequently, very eaſy and delightful to themſelves; will raiſe them very probably above the condition they were born to, and lay a good foundation for their own ſelf-ſubſiſtence, when once an occaſion ſhall offer. But, however this happen, they are to conſider, that there is an unſpeakable pleaſure and ſatisfaction in having done their duty, and that the reflections of a good conſcience are a continued feaſt; that they ſerve not men only, but God, who ſees all their diligence and induſtry, all their faithfulneſs and honeſty, though removed from the eye of their earthly maſter, and will reward them openly; that the time is coming, when [k] of the Lord they ſhall receive the reward of the inheritance; and, from being ſervants, ſhall be made happy in the glorious liberty of the ſons of God: and then, whatever hardſhips or uneaſineſs they undergo, whatever want of neceſſaries and conveniencies they ſuffer, whatever ſeverities or cruel inflictions they endure here, by the undue rigour of their maſters or ſuperiors, they are confident that there will be an ample amends made them by that God who judgeth righteouſly, and with whom there is no reſpect of perſons.

5. Between Friend and Friend.

The neceſſity and benefit of friendſhip.

OF all the relations wherein we ſtand toward one another there is none more ſtrict and binding, none more neceſſary and beneficial, than that of friendſhip. [l] For human nature is imperfect; it has not fund enough to furniſh out a ſolitary life; and the moſt delicious place, barred from all commerce and ſociety, would be inſupportable, and make a man run mad with his own happineſs. Beſides, there are ſo many adverſe accidents attending us, that without the communion of friendſhip virtue itſelf is not able to accompliſh its end; becauſe the best good man, on ſeveral occaſions, often wants an aſſiſtant to direct his judgment, and quicken his induſtry, and fortify his ſpirits. [m] A brother indeed, as the wiſe man obſerves, was born for adverſity, but [n] there is a friend that ſticketh cloſer than a brother

k Col. iii. 24. l Collier's Eſſays. m Prov. xvii. 17. n Ibid. xviii. 24.

ther; and therefore he that has found this precious treasure, has laid up a good foundation against the day of trouble; [o] because every true and real friendship will be an alloy to his sorrows, an ease to his passions, a sanctuary to his calamities, a relief of his oppressions, a repository of his secrets, a counsellor of his doubts, and an advocate for his interest, both with God and man. And yet, as necessary and beneficial as this relation is in all conditions of life, there is no one thing wherein we mistake ourselves more. [p] Men usually call them their Friends, with whom they have an intimacy, though that intimacy perhaps is nothing else but an union and combination in sin. The drunkard, for instance, thinks him his friend who will swallow wine in bowls, and keep him company in his debauches; the proud man, him his friend, who will blow up the bladder, and indulge his vanity with fulsome flattery; and the deceitful man, him his friend, that will aid and assist him in carrying on his schemes of fraud and dishonesty: but alas! this is so far from being friendship, that it deserves a very different appellation, and is indeed too near a resemblance of the practice of the prince of darkness, who is a worker together with mens passions, for the destruction of their souls. A true friend loves his friend so, that he is very zealous for his good; and certainly he that is really so, will never be the instrument of bringing him into the greatest evil. How far soever then [q] a resemblance in humour or opinion, a fancy for the same business or diversion, may, on some occasions, be a ground of affection; yet [r] this is generally allowed, both by moralists and divines, that virtue is the only proper foundation of friendship, and [s] that none but good men are capable of it: and among these it may not improperly be defined to be, "an industrious pursuit of our friend's real advantages, or obliging ourselves to do unto him all the good offices that our fidelity and assistance, our advice and admonition, our candour and constancy, can effect."

A common mistake herein.

1. FRIENDSHIP, both in the Latin and Greek languages, takes its denomination from love: and as love is every where the same, so is there no principle more faithful, and what less consults the arts of dissimulation. A friend therefore will pursue the advantages of those he truly loves as if they were his own; because there will be no great difference between the power of self-love, and the love of a person whom, by the laws of friendship he is bound to love as well as himself. From this principle he espouses his interest, whether the opportunities of doing him service be known to him or not: he maintains his honour and right, though invaded by the most potent adversary,

The offices of it. Fidelity.

[o] Scott's Christian Life. [p] The Whole Duty of Man. [q] Collier's Essays. [r] Nam cum conciliatrix amicitiæ virtutis opinio fuerit, difficile est amicitiam, manere si a virtute defeceris. Tull. de Amic. [s] Ita sit verum istud, quod definitio dixi, amicitiam nisi inter bonos esse non posse. Tull. ibid.

or ſtruck at by the moſt clandeſtine malice. And as he ſuffer none he can hinder to injure his character or fortune; ſo h is eſpecially careful himſelf to avoid all indecent familiarities i company, or mercenary encroachments upon his good nature as very well knowing that [t] friendſhip, though it be not nic and exceptious, yet muſt not be coarſely treated, and [u] tha the neglect of modeſty and good manners therein is the wan of its greateſt ornament. Above all, he is continually upon h guard to keep the ſecrets which his friend has repoſed in h breaſt, with the moſt ſacred taciturnity; becauſe a diſcovery theſe, in the opinion of the wiſe ſon of Syrach, who well unde ſtood the laws and punctualities of friendſhip, is an offence of a others the moſt provoking, and the moſt unpardonable. Fo [*] whoſo diſcovereth ſecrets loſeth his credit, and ſhall neve find a friend to his mind. Love thy friend, and be faithful t him; but if thou betrayeſt his ſecrets, follow no more aft him: for as one letteth a bird out of his hand, ſo haſt thou l thy friend go, and ſhall not get him again. Follow after hi no more; for he is too far off: he is as a roe eſcaped out of th ſnare. As for a wound, it may be bound up, and after revilin there may be a reconciliation; but he that bewrayeth ſecrets without hope.

Aſſiſtance. 2. How far the meaſure of mutual aſſiſtance ought to exte among friends, is not ſo eaſy a matter, in each particular to d termine; but this we may ſay in general, that, as far as oppo tunity, diſcretion, and former pre-engagements will give leave, we may be allowed to go; and that to break upon th ſcore of danger or expence is narrow-ſpirited; provided th aſſiſtance may be given without ruin to ourſelves or prejudice a third perſon, without breach of honour, or violation of co ſcience. [x] Where the thing is unlawful, we muſt neither a nor comply. All importunities againſt juſtice are feveriſh d ſires, and muſt not be gratified. He that would engage anoth in an unwarrantable action, takes him for an ill perſon, and, the motion is an affront, ought to be renounced for the inju of his opinion. But where this is not the caſe, we ought treat our friend, as far as prudence and juſtice will permit, wi all the frankneſs and generoſity imaginable; to council h when he wants advice; to cheer him when he wants comfor to give unto him when he wants relief; and even with ſo hazard to ourſelves, to reſcue him when he is in danger: a in doing of this [y] we ſhould conſider his occaſions, and preve his deſires, and ſcarce give him time to think that he want our aſſiſtance; becauſe a forwardneſs to oblige, is a great gr up

t Collier's Eſſays. u Maximum ornamentum amicitiæ tollit, qui ex tollit verecundiam. Tull. de Amic. * Eccluſ. xxvii. 16, &c. x Hæc igi lex in amicitia ſanciatur, ut neque rogemus res turpes, nec faciamus rog Tull. ibid. y Collier, ibid.

pon our kindneſs, and that which doubles the intrinſic worth f it.

3. It is the obſervation of the wiſe king of Iſrael, Wo to him hat is alone! for if he falleth, he hath not another to help him p: and this obſervation is verified upon none ſo much as upon im that is deſtitute of friends; [a] who, when he is under a perlexity of affairs, where a determination is dubious, and yet of ncommon conſequence, cannot fetch in aid from another perſon, whoſe judgment may be greater than his own, and whoſe oncern he is ſure is no leſs. Every man in his own affairs is ound to be leſs cautious than a prudent ſtander-by: he is gerally too eagerly engaged to make juſt remarks upon the proreſs and probability of things; [a] and, in ſuch a caſe, nothing ſo proper as a judicious friend to temper the ſpirits and moerate the purſuit; to give the ſignal for action, to preſs the dvantage, and ſtrike in the critical minute. Foreign intelligence may have a ſpy in it; and therefore ſhould be cautiouſly ceived: ſtrangers (I call all ſuch except friends) may be degning in their advice, or, if they be ſincere, by miſtaking the lſe, they may give wrong meaſures; but now an old friend as the whole ſcheme in his head. He knows the conſtitution, e diſeaſe, the ſtrength, and the humour of him he aſſiſts; hat he can do, and what he can bear, and therefore none ſo roper as he to preſcribe; to direct the enterpriſe, and ſecure e main chance. Advice.

4. But, among all the offices of friendſhip, [b] there is none at comes up to our aiding and aſſiſting the ſoul of our friend, d endeavouring to advance his ſpiritual ſtate, by exhortations d encouragements to all virtue, by earneſt and vehement diſaſions from all ſin, and eſpecially by kind and gentle reproofs, here there is reaſon to preſume an offence has been committed. his is ſo peculiarly the duty of a friend, that there is none beſes ſo duly qualified for it. The reproofs of a relation may thought to proceed from an affectation of ſuperiority; of an emy, from a ſpirit of malice; and of an indifferent perſon, m pride or impertinence; and ſo be ſlighted: but, when they me from one who loves us as his own ſoul, and come armed th all the tender concern that an unfeigned affection is known dictate, they muſt of courſe take effect, and become irreible. Men, like falſe glaſſes, generally repreſent their comxion better than nature has made it: they have no great clination to be prying into their own deformities, and have h unwillingneſs to hear of their faults, that whoever undertes the work, had need have a ſtrong prepoſſeſſion in his faur; and therefore the friend, that alone is qualified for it, s the part of a flatterer, and betrays the offender into ſecuy, when he ſees him commit things worthy of blame, and yet ſilently Admonition,

[a] South's Sermons, Vol. II. [a] Collier's Eſſays. [b] The Whole Duty of Man.

ſilently paſſes them by: [c] Open reproof, ſays the wiſe man, i better than ſuch ſecret love; for faithful are the wounds of friend; but the kiſſes of an enemy are deceitful.

muſt be candid,

BUT though we are required to admoniſh our friend whe we ſee him do amiſs, yet the manner in which we are to do it will require our utmoſt care, and ſhew our ſkill and addreſs, a well as our love and eſteem for him. A word fitly ſpoken ſays Solomon, is like apples of gold in pictures of ſilver: as a ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold: ſo is a wiſe re prover upon an obedient ear: [d] what gracefulneſs there is i colours judiciouſly choſen and rightly put together; what a greeableneſs there is in the moſt valuable metals ſo appoſitel placed as to add to each other's luſtre; what beauty ariſes fro the richeſt and choiceſt ornaments; ſuch is the gracefulnes ſuch is the excellency, ſuch the beauty of a wiſe reproof, fitte to the occaſion of it, to the perſon and character of thoſe tha reprove, and of thoſe that are reproved: and this, in the ca of friends, ought certainly to be managed with all candour an kindneſs, with all meekneſs and humility, without any ſigns bitterneſs, any words of reproach, or airs of ſuperiority.

and private.

BUT though we are allowed in this manner to reprove th faults of our friend, yet we are to remember that this is to b done in private: and that no care muſt be wanting on our part to conceal them from the knowledge of others. And believ me it is a great and noble thing, to cover the blemiſhes and ex cuſe the failings of a friend; to draw a curtain before his ſtain and to diſplay his perfections; to bury his weakneſs in ſilence and proclaim his virtues upon the houſe top. This, as [e] on expreſſes it, is an imitation of the charities of heaven, which when the creature lies proſtrate in the weakneſs of ſlee ſpreads the covering of night and darkneſs over it, to conceal in that condition: but as ſoon as our ſpirits are refreſhed, an nature returns to its morning vigour, God then bids the ſu riſe, and the day ſhine upon us, both to advance and ſhew ou activity.

THESE are ſome of the duties or approved qualities of friend ſhip, viz. to be faithful in our poſſeſſions, zealous in our ſervice prudent in our advices, and gentle in our reproofs to our friend to be dumb to his ſecrets, ſilent to his faults, and full of th commendations of his virtues: and where theſe are mutuall practiſed, there is leſs danger of the remaining duty, which

Conſtancy. conſtancy, or ſuch a ſtability and firmneſs of friendſhip as ove looks and paſſes by all thoſe leſſer failures of kindneſs and r ſpect, that, through frailties incident to human nature, a ma may be ſometimes guilty of, and yet ſtill retain the ſame hab tu

c Prov. xxvii. 5, 6. Moleſta veritas, ſi quidem ex ea naſcitur odium, qu eſt venenum amicitiæ: Sed obſequium multo moleſtius, quod peccatis ind gens, precipitem amicum ferri ſinit. Tull. de Amic. d Smalridge's Sermon e South's Sermons, Vol II.

ual good-will, and prevailing propenſity of mind to his friend hat he had before. Alas! there is no expecting the temper f Paradiſe from poſt-diluvian mortals: the beſt of people can-ot be always in the ſame temper, always awake and entertain-ng. The accidents of life, the indiſpoſitions of health, the mperfections of reaſon muſt be allowed for, nor muſt every mbiguous expreſſion, or every little chagrin or ſtart of paſſion e thought a ſufficient cauſe of diſunion. [f] Ointment and per-ume, ſays the wiſe man, rejoice the heart; ſo does the ſweet-neſs of a man's friend: whereupon it follows, thine own friend, nd thy father's friend, forſake not: to part with a tried friend, nd one that is grown old, as it were, in the ſervice of the amily, beſides the injuſtice done him, is both unreaſonable evity, ſuch as argues a mind governed by caprice only, and gregious folly, ſuch as prodigally caſts away one of the greateſt leſſings of human life: for a faithful friend is a ſtrong defence; nd he that hath found ſuch an one, hath found a treaſure. nd as nothing can countervail a faithful friend, ſo, when we ave once entered into that relation, I know of nothing that ould diſſolve it, but either downright malevolence or incorri-ible vice. Theſe indeed ſtrike at the fundamentals, and make correſpondence impracticable: but even when the caſe comes this unhappy paſs, there is ſtill a decency in the manner of ur diſunion, and prudence ſeems to direct that we ſhould draw ff by degrees, rather than come to an open rupture.

The qualifications of a friend.

FROM what has been ſaid on this ſubject, it ſeems plainly to llow, that every one is not qualified to enter into the relation friendſhip, wherein there is occaſion for largeneſs of mind, nd agreeableneſs of temper; for prudence of behaviour, for urage and conſtancy, for freedom from paſſion and ſelf-conceit. man that is fit to make a friend of, muſt have conduct to ma-ge the engagement, and reſolution to maintain it: he muſt e freedom without roughneſs; and oblige without deſign. owardice will betray friendſhip, and covetouſneſs will ſtarve : folly will be nauſeous; paſſion is apt to ruffle, and pride ill fly out into contumely and neglect: and therefore to con-ude with the wiſdom of the ſon of Syrach, in relation to the oice of a friend; if thou wouldeſt get a friend, ſays he, prove m firſt, and be not haſty to credit him; for ſome man is a iend for his own occaſion, and will not abide in the day of thy ouble: as again, ſome friend is a companion at the table: in y proſperity he will be as thyſelf; but if thou be brought w, he will be againſt thee, and hide himſelf from thy face. herefore prove thy friend firſt, and be not haſty to credit him.

6. Between

[f] Prov. xxvii. 9, &c.

6. Between Superiors in Rank, Parts, Riches and Beneficence, and their reſpective Inferiors.

What ſuperiority theſe things give them.

HOWEVER we are born alike, and derived all from the ſame original, yet, when we come into the world, there are certain rights and privileges, either natural or acquired, that occaſion an inequality, and give one man a ſuperiority over another. [g] As all titles of honour roſe originally from the field, and were the royal rewards of martial adventures and atchievements, though in after ages diſpenſed to ſuch as had merited for their civil conduct; ſo the common conſent of mankind has always accounted them honourable, and that the perſons where they reſide, whether by deſcent or creation, deſerve a deference and reſpect extraordinary. Wiſdom or knowledge of any kind, as the wiſe man obſerves, raiſes men above the common level, and abundantly compenſates the obſcurity of birth: [h] exalt her therefore, ſays he, and ſhe will promote thee; ſhe will bring thee to honour; ſhe will give to thine head an ornament of grace; and a crown of glory will ſhe deliver to thee. Riches are ſo univerſally courted, that every one ſees what reſpect they demand wherever they appear, and how they ſeem to atone for perſonal defects, even when fallen into hands that make no laudable uſe of them; but when diſpenſed in acts of beneficence and generoſity, how they attract the eyes of all, and make the man ſhine with a diſtinguiſhed luſtre.

But they ſhould not make men proud,

BUT though theſe excellencies create a ſuperiority, and ſet the poſſeſſors of them in an elevation above others; yet will they by no means countenance pride, or give them a licence to trample upon thoſe that they thus ſurmount: for [i] who makes thee to differ from another? And what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive? Thy deſcent from an antient and honourable family, thy great proficiency in arts and ſciences, thy immenſe increaſe of wealth and riches, nay the very [k] power to get thereof, and heart to make uſe of them, now that thou haſt them, are all from the gift and ordination of providence, which might have ſent thee into the world an idiot, a beggar, or (what is as ill) a niggard of thy wealth; and therefore, ſince thou didſt receive it from God, why doſt thou glory as if thou hadſt not received it?

becauſe they are uncertain,

BUT if even all theſe accompliſhments were our own, yet are they of ſo precarious and uncertain a texture, of ſo imperfect and limited an uſe, that they can by no means be the proper matter of our boaſting. In relation to wealth, which is equally applicable to nobility and learning, St Paul enjoins his ſon Timothy to [l] charge them that are rich in this world that they

g Vid. Selden's Titles of Honour. h Prov. iv. 9. i 1 Cor. iv. 7. k Eccles. vi. l 1 Tim. vi. 17.

not high-minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches, but in the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. The great ſtrength of the argument, we may obſerve, is couched in the word uncertain; for as nothing is more fluctuating than wealth, which every element can deſtroy; ſo the infatuation muſt needs be great to place a truſt on that which is ſo flitting and unſteady; or (in Solomon's phraſe) to [m] ſet one's eyes on that which is not; for riches certainly make themſelves wings, and fly away as an eagle towards heaven.

and of no great uſe.

BUT admitting they were more permanent, yet ſtill we may be allowed to aſk, wherein are they to be accounted of? Since there are ſo many miſeries incident to human life wherein they can give us no aid or relief. [n] Is a man, for inſtance, afflicted in his body with pain? The Indies are not a competent price for minutes eaſe, for an hour's ſleep. Is he perſecuted in his name with reproach? It is not whole ingots of gold that can ſtop the mouth of fame: nay, many times the obloquy itſelf is but the progeny of wealth, of wealth breeding envy, and envy detraction. But if the ſore lies deeper yet, and affects his immortal part, he is ſtill farther removed from the poſſibility of relief. If he ſuffer as a ſlave under the dominion of vice, no treaſure can redeem him from that vaſſalage: if it groans under a ſenſe of guilt, and the terrors of an accuſing conſcience; alas! gold is no balm to a wounded ſpirit: the luxuries which that has ſupported may help to pierce, but it has no power to heal: or, laſtly, if the ſoul fall finally under the puniſhment of ſin, there is no commuting that penance, no buying off that ſmart: riches abuſed may indeed ſwell the account, and multiply the ſtripes, but this is the day of wrath, wherein they will not, wherein they cannot bribe the remiſſion of one pain. Since then the accompliſhments of birth, fortune, and erudition, are not ſufficient to ſecure us in our moſt important intereſts; [o] Thus ſaith the Lord, Let not the wiſe man glory in his wiſdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his ſtrength; let not the rich man glory in his riches; neither let the nobleman glory in his birth or titles? but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he underſtandeth, and knoweth me.

They ſhould not deſpiſe their inferiors, becauſe none are contemptible.

II. ANOTHER duty that perſons of this eminence owe to their inferiors, is not to deſpiſe them upon the account of their poverty, ignorance or obſcure parentage, ſo long as they are honeſt and harmleſs men, but to be kind and condeſcenſive, in relieving the poor, inſtructing the ignorant, and ſetting them at times a good example. Think we never ſo long, we cannot imagine any thing that could poſſibly induce God to create the world, and to ſtock this ſublunary part of it with mankind, but either the manifeſtation of his glory, or the communication of his goodneſs. His glory ſeems to come ſecondary in view, as

m Prov. xxiii. 5. n The Gentleman's Calling. o Jer. ix. 23, 24.

as ſubſequent to the work when finiſhed; ‡ the prime impul
ſive cauſe and reaſon was certainly his goodneſs. And if good
neſs was the great motive of communicating exiſtence to man
kind, we cannot but conclude that the ſame goodneſs attende
the conſultations of his wiſdom when he appointed them thei
different ſtations and conditions of life: for with him there i
no reſpect of perſons: [p] the rich he regardeth no more tha
the poor, the prince than the peaſant; for they are all the wor
of his hands. And if they be the work of his hands, we canno
but ſuppoſe that they are as excellent in their kind as thoſe tha
appear in the world in a brighter figure. The ſun, moon an
all the hoſt of heaven are, at the firſt ſight, mighty demonſtra
tions of the Creator's power and godhead; but thoſe that loo
farther into the works of nature, can ſhew us the traces of th
ſame Almighty hand in the texture of the ſmalleſt inſect, or o
the ſurface of the meaneſt plant: they can behold and admir
I ſay, the wonders of creating providence in an ant as much
an elephant; and in the loweſt ſhrub as much as in the talle
cedar in Lebanon: for the ſmaller the compound is, the mo
curious the workmanſhip; and the more curious the workma
ſhip, the greater the ſkill both in contriving and compleating i
And, in like manner, the condition that makes but a mean a
pearance in the world is not without its excellencies, and th
marks of God's favour and benignity abiding upon it.

A deſcription of the poor man's ſtate.

THE poor illiterate man that riſes up with the ſun, and
ſoon as he is riſen, directeth his prayers and oriſons to God, h
chiefeſt comfort and ſupport, to bleſs his little family, to aſſi
them with his grace, and protect them with his providence, a
to proſper the thing that they ſhall take in hand; that, havi
eaten his morſel with content and thankfulneſs, goeth out to h
labour and to his work, with the ſweet perfumes of the mor
ing air, and the warbling notes of every hedge and wood to a
tend him; that in the courſe of his labour preſerves chearfu
neſs and a good conſcience; ſings away one part of the he
and burden of the day, ſanctifies the other with good meditatio
and in the concluſion, performs his taſk and gives up his a
count with joy; that, at his return home, is received with t
ſmiles of his little ones, and the undiſſembled love of his wif
amuſes the evening with their innocent talk and play; what
has provided eats with appetite and in communion; calls
little branches about his table, and is revived himſelf to ſee th
proſper and thrive; bleſſes God, in fine, for the mercies of
day; implores his forgiveneſs for the tranſgreſſions of it;
comme

‡ This is ſo decernible by the mere light of reaſon, that the philoſoph
when they are upon the inquiry what ſhould be the impulſive cauſe and rea
of God's making the world, without heſitation ſolve the problem by di
goodneſs; for ſo we find Seneca arguing, Queris quid ſit propoſitum D
BONITAS. Ita certe PLATO ait. Quæ Deo faciendi mundum cauſa f
BONUS EST: Bono nulla cujuſquam boni invidia eſt. Epiſt. 65. p Job xxxiv

commends himſelf and his family to the protection of his good-appointed angels; and ſo ſecurely lays him down to reſt, and in one continued ſweet repoſe repairs nature, and beguiles the live-long nights: the poor conſcientious man, I ſay, that in this tenor of life goes ſmoothly on, makes a figure enough to raiſe our envy, and engage our choice; and in this humble ſphere God looks down upon him with more pleaſure and delectation than he did upon Cæſar in his triumphal chariot, or Solomon in all his robes of glory. Where then are [s] the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men? Where is the wiſe? * Where is the ſcribe? Where is the diſputer of this world? God hath choſen the fooliſh things of this world to confound the wiſe; and God hath choſen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and the baſe things of the world, and things which are deſpiſed, hath God choſen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence.

It is the obſervation of the wiſe man, and a very important one it is, [r] whoſo mocketh the poor, the poor, whether in parts, pedigree, or fortune, reproacheth his Maker, finds fault with the diſpenſations of providence: for, ſince the poor man could not help his ſtation in life, the reproach falls ultimately upon God; but he that honoureth his maker, hath mercy upon the poor. The greateſt man living therefore muſt not diſdain to be told, that he who made him in the womb, made likewiſe the poor, and faſhioned them both alike; that human nature, even the meaneſt guiſe, as being the image of God, cannot be contemptible; that the outſide and trappings of the man make no part of his ſpecies; and that, in the eyes of God Almighty, no man is better looked upon for having rich blood in his veins, or for loading himſelf with thick clay: muſt not diſdain to be told that the man of thouſands, and ten thouſand times ten thouſands, is not properly the owner of one farthing; at the moſt he is but a ſteward in God's family; his revenues, conſequently, are his debts, and the larger his eſtate, the greater his labour and charge, [s] to give every one their portion of meat in due ſeaſon; which if he neglects to do, and begins to live luxuriouſly himſelf, and to beat and oppreſs his fellow-ſervants, the Lord will come in a day, when he looked not for him, and will cut him aſunder, and appoint him his portion with unbelievers. Above all, let them not diſdain to be reminded of the high but dangerous ſtation wherein providence has placed them; of the ſupport of parentage and alliances, of the accompliſhment of parts by a liberal education, the advantages of their wealth and large fortune, the power of their authority, and the

Rev. vi. 15. * 1 Cor. i. 20, &c. r Prov. xvii. 5. s Luke xii. 42, &c.

influence of their example; and, from a ſenſe and right eſtimate of theſe, as they would do honour to the families from whence they ſpring, and improve the talents committed to their truſt, and make themſelves friends of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs; as they would gain the inward eſteem of mankind, whereof their outward titles are ſometimes falſe echoes, and be looked upon like ſo many gods and tutelar angels in the ſeveral countries where they live, reſolve to purſue the practice of Job (a perſon of equal quality with themſelves) of [u] being eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame; and a father to the poor; of drawing out their ſoul to the hungry, and ſatisfying the afflicted ſoul; of [x] undoing the heavy burdens, and breaking every yoke; and eſpecially of letting their light ſo ſhine before men that the whole ſphere wherein they move may be influenced and directed by the brightneſs of their example. Then [y] ſhall their light break forth as the morning, when every [z] ear that hears them, ſhall bleſs them, and every eye that ſees them, ſhall give witneſs of them, and glorify their father, which is in heaven.

THESE are the duties wherein perſons of high birth, fortune and other accompliſhments ſtand indebted to their inferiors, and what their inferiors, in return owe to them, may be reduced to theſe two particulars, honour and gratitude: honour where eminent qualities are obſerved; and gratitude when favours and obligations have been received.

The duties of inferiors to their ſuperiors.

I. AS honours were at firſt deſigned for the reward of great and laudable actions, ſo were they made ſucceſſive, for the farther encouragement and promotion of them. Were the honours which men propoſe to themſelves in performing any great atchievements, to terminate with their lives, this would diſcourage their zeal, and put a damp upon their reſolutions to undertake them; but when they underſtand that the renown which will accrue to them, will be made hereditary, and deſcend to their lateſt poſterity; this is ſuch a ſpur to illuſtrious actions, as he who has any ſenſe of ambition or love for his country cannot but feel: and for this reaſon it is preſumed that perſons of noble birth, having the examples of their anceſtors and the ſenſe of ſhame (if they ſhould fall ſhort of their virtues and incur the imputation of degeneracy) always before their eyes, ſhould exert themſelves with a more than ordinary vigour and reſolution to avoid that reproach, and conſequently to ſignalize themſelves in every thing that is excellent and praiſe-worthy. Upon theſe accounts it is generally ſuppoſed that perſons of high titles and honourable parentage are men of real worth; and though they chance to be the reverſe, yet in compliance to the end of civil inſtitution, they ought to be treated with external obſervance, leſt in the perſon of particulars, the whole order ſhould think itſelf neglected. In like manner

Honour.

where

u Job xxix. 15, 16. x Iſa. lviii. 6, &c. y Ibid. ver. 8. z Job. xxix. 11.

when any honour is conferred by a prince, though the perſon ſhould not have all the merit that might be expected, yet an outward regard is certainly due to him, becauſe the expreſſions of royal favour have the ſame efficacy in diſtinguiſhing the objects of it, that the royal ſtamp has to put a difference between coins, and even ſometimes to give a current and intrinſic value to that which has little or none of itſelf. And ſo again, though riches are ſometimes found in the hands of perſons that have the leaſt pretence to perſonal merit; though not only folly (as Solomon obſerves) but ſometimes vice and injuſtice are ſet in high dignity, yet the reaſons of outward reſpect are oftener founded on the relative than real characters of men. So that, as riches make a man more conſiderable in the commonwealth, and more capable of ſerving its intereſt, thoſe that are the poſſeſſors of them, have a right at leaſt to ſome ſhare of our regard in their civil capacity, how little ſoever they may deſerve it in their private. But where, in conjunction with an ample fortune, we diſcover any generous and laudable qualities; where the perſon whom the king delights to honour, puts on righteouſneſs, as Job expreſſes it, for his clothing, and judgment for his robe and his diadem, there the degrees of our honour and reſpect can hardly tranſcend the bounds of our duty.

II. ANOTHER duty which inferiors, thoſe eſpecially that have received favours and obligations, owe to their ſuperiors is gratitude; which conſiſts in a ſenſibility of kindneſs received, and an endeavour either to acknowledge or repay them. To repay them perhaps by an equivalent return may not be in the perſon's power, and, conſequently, cannot be his duty: but thanks are a tribute payable by the pooreſt, ſince none is ſo indigent as not to have a heart to be ſenſible, and a tongue to expreſs its reſentment of a benefit when he hath received it. What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? Says holy David, reflecting upon the divine goodneſs to him: and in like manner, under a lively apprehenſion of any human favours, "What ſhall I do, ſhould the grateful man ſay to himſelf, for ſuch a friend, for ſuch a patron, who has ſo frankly, ſo generouſly, ſo unconſtrainedly relieved me in my diſtreſs; ſupported me againſt ſuch an enemy; ſupplied, cheriſhed and upheld me, when relations would not know me, or at leaſt could not help me; and, in a word, has prevented my deſire, and out-done my neceſſities? I can never return him a kindneſs any ways anſwerable, but I may, as I am in juſtice bound, expreſs my thankful remembrance of what he has done. I can take all fair occaſions to commemorate his good offices, and by the little ſervices I am able to do, teſtify my willingneſs to make him a full requital if I could." [b] For, in the matter of debt, he who cannot pay all, muſt compound and

and gratitude.

[a] South's Sermons, Vol. I. [b] Scott's Chriſtian Life.

and pay as far as he is able; ſo, in the matter of beneficence, when we cannot make a complete requital, we are obliged to make ſome ſmall compoſition, and if we can do no more, to expreſs a grateful ſenſe of what we have received, and give thankful words for beneficial actions, which all generous benefactors eſteem the nobleſt return; except it be to bleſs God for theſe great inſtruments of his bounty to us; to offer up our prayers for their proſperity, both ſpiritual and temporal; and to intercede with heaven, ſince we find ourſelves inſolvent, to make them a full requital at the retribution of the juſt.

SECT. III.

Of Mercy in General.

Mercy, what.

MERCY, in the general notion of it, is a trouble or uneaſineſs of ſpirit conceived at ſome evil that has befallen another, and attended with an ardent deſire to help him out of it; and from hence we may perceive that it is a mixed paſſion compounded of ſorrow and deſire; ſorrow for the evil of the patient, and deſire to deliver him from it. But here a queſtion will ariſe, what kind of evil is the proper object of this ſorrow, or what is it that ſhould recommend a man to our pity? Who the objects of it.

[c] Some very conſiderable moraliſts and divines will allow no other evil to be capable of pity but the evil of pain, and that only when it is undeſerved: but why ſin ſhould not fall under our pity, as well as any other evil, ſince an irreclaimable ſinner is the moſt miſerable object we can think of, I cannot conceive: and though I readily grant that affliction, when joined with innocence is very apt to excite compaſſion; yet, upon the whole, I cannot but think that the guilty ſufferer is more to be pitied than the innocent; ſince I can pity him for his demerit and his miſery too; whereas the latter is pitiable only for his miſery. The guilty patient indeed is not to be pitied ſo much for his direct miſery, becauſe he deſerves it; but then he is more to be pitied for his deſert and miſery together, than the other is for his miſery only: and I make no doubt but that our compaſſionate Saviour, when he wept over Jeruſalem, relented as much for the ſins as for the vengeance that was hanging over that unhappy city, and that, had theſe two great tragic ſcenes been at once preſented before him, the ſlaughter of the innocent, and the deſtruction of the guilty people, he would have found more to be pitied in the latter than in the former tragedy.

THIS being premiſed, concerning the extent of mercy and compaſſion, that it is converſant about evils of all kinds, whether ſpiritual or temporal, deſerved or undeſerved, we ſhall now proceed to conſider, 1. Some of the obligations and reaſons

[c] Norris's Diſcourſes, Vol. I.

ons; and 2. Some of the motives and inducements, we all lie nder to the practice of this virtue.

The uſefulneſs of it.

I. THE Stoics indeed are ſo far from accounting mercy a irtue, that, according to the vogue of their morality, it paſſes or a [d] ſin, for an inſtance of weakneſs and littleneſs of ſoul, nd ſuch a piece of ſoftneſs and effeminacy, as does not comport ith the character of their wiſe man, who is allowed indeed to elieve, but not to be troubled for the afflicted; to add, if he an, to the tranquillity of their minds, but not to ſuffer his own o be diſcompoſed at the ſight of any calamity. This however nſtead of improving, is debaſing human nature, and robbing it f that happineſs and ſecurity which we may reaſonably promiſe urſelves from the protection of ſociety; for the protection f ſociety, without a kind compaſſion and inclination to aſſiſt, a- ails us nothing: It is then only that we reap the benefit of ociety, when there is the ſame ſympathy in the politic that here is in the natural body; when, • if one member ſuffer, all he members ſuffer with it, or, if one member rejoice, all the embers rejoice with it.

Interwoven in both mind and body.

UPON the account then that this paſſion is of ſuch happy dvantage to the preſent condition of man, God has been pleaſed plant in our nature ſo ſtrong a propenſity to it, that when e read or hear of the calamities of other men, our bowels earn by a natural ſympathy, though they be never ſo far diſnt from us, and are no otherwiſe related to us than as they artake of the ſame common nature. Nay, though we know e calamities which we read and hear to be nothing but roantic fictions, yet ſtill the very imagination of them melts us to tears, in deſpite of our will and reaſon; an evident inſtance f the general ſympathy which interferes between all men, ſince e can neither hear nor ſee, nor imagine others miſeries withnt being touched with a ſenſible pain and affliction for them.

NOR has God given this propenſity to the ſoul only, but toether with that, has diſpoſed the very make and figuration of e body ſo, that the whole man might ſtand inclined to acts of ercy and commiſeration. How the animal ſpirits operate is rd to determine; but this we know, that [f] whenever we hapn to caſt our eyes upon a man that is wounded, we find a dden tide of them thronging towards thoſe parts of our own dy which anſwer to the parts of the wounded man, and ſo ſing a ſentiment of pity or compaſſion in us, which we can more help being affected with, than we can hinder our animal irits from flowing to, and affecting that part of our body which rreſponds to the object before us.

SINCE

[d] Ægritudo animi ob alienarum miſeriarum ſpeciem eſt miſericordia; egriudo autem in ſapientem virum non cadet. Sen. de Clem. c. 4. And accordg to his maſter Seneca, Lipſius defines it to be vitium puſilli minutique animi ſpeciem alieni mali collabentis. [e] 1 Cor. xii. 26. [f] Norris's Diſcourſes, l. I.

Agreeable to the nature of God.

SINCE the God of nature therefore has laid the ground o this affection, in the compoſition both of ſoul and body; ſince h has implanted in us ſuch a mutual ſympathy as makes another' miſery our pain, which, without doing violence to ourſelves, w cannot be eaſed of, without wiſhing at leaſt to be able to re move it; this I take to be an eternal and immutable reaſo why we ought to be merciful to one another, eſpecially conſi dering, that this is farther incumbent upon us, both in imita tion of the nature, and in conformity to the will of our grea Creator

THE doctors of the Talmud, ſpeaking of the employment o God before the creation of the world, lay it down for a truth that he was contriving how to be merciful to mankind: and con triving indeed he was how to ſhew mercy to man, but not b the way of ſtudy and employment of mind, as theſe idle dreamer groſsly imagine. His mercy is eſſential to his nature, and there fore it is ſaid to be [g] from everlaſting, [h] to endure for ever and himſelf is ſtiled [i] the God of all Grace, and [k] the Father o Mercies, whoſe compaſſions, and [l] the ſounding of whos bowels fail not, and who [m] keepeth mercy for thouſands, for giving iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin. And indeed, if we con ſider a little the method of God's dealing with mankind, in crea ing them at firſt, in ſuſtaining them with his power, in protec ing them with his providence, in ſanctifying them with his grace and above all, in redeeming them from eternal ruin, by th coſtly price of his own Son's blood; we cannot but obſerve continued ſeries of divine mercy and compaſſion running throug every age of the world, and through every moment of eac man's life.

Preſcribed in his word.

NOW for the ſame reaſon that God does himſelf continual delight in acts of mercy, and takes a peculiar pleaſure in d ſcribing himſelf by that particular attribute; for the ſame re ſon it muſt neceſſarily be his will, that we ſhould imitate him what he himſelf finds ſo great complacency. [n] Be ye therefo merciful, ſays our bleſſed Saviour, as your Father, which is heaven, is merciful; [o] Put on, as the elect of God, bowels mercy, kindneſs, meekneſs, long-ſuffering; and [p] be of the ſam mind towards one another, weeping with thoſe that weep, a [q] bearing one another's burdens, in order to fulfil the law Chriſt.

Exemplified by Chriſt.

AND well might the law of Chriſt preſcribe us this dut when he himſelf, while on earth, in commiſeration to mankin went about [r] healing every ſickneſs and every diſeaſe; and ſe ing the multitudes fainting, and ſcattered abroad like ſhe wanting a ſhepherd, *eſplagchnis the peri autoon*, was moved wi compaſſi

g Pſal. ciii. 17. h Ibid. cvi. 1. i 1 Pet. v. 10. k 2 Cor. i. 3. l Iſa. lxiii. m Exod. xxxiv. 7. n Luke vi. 36. o Col. iii. 12. p Rom. xii. 15. q Gal. vi. 2. r Matth. ix. 35, 36.

ompaſſion on them; ſo we render it indeed, but the expreſſion
too high and pregnant for any verbal tranſlation: when he
imſelf, even now that he is in heaven, retains ſtill the ſame
enderneſs of ſpirit, though in other reſpects impaſſible, and for
is reaſon is called [s] a merciful high-prieſt, that cannot but be
ouched with a feeling of our infirmities.

The excellency of it.

WELL might the law of Chriſt preſcribe us this duty, which
f all others, is moſt appoſite to our preſent ſtate and circum-
ances: for, ſince every man is liable to become miſerable, no-
ing is more juſt and equitable than that we ſhould deal with
hers, as we would be dealt by. Put the caſe then (as you
ery well may) that you were now as miſerable as that wretched
eature is that craves your ſuccour and relief, would you not
eſire relief with the ſame importunity that he does? Since the
nſe of miſery, and the deſire of mercy are inſeparable, doubt-
ſs you would. And is there not all the reaſon in the world
en that you ſhould grant him what you would aſk for yourſelf,
you were in his circumſtances, and he in yours? What there-
re the apoſtle ſays, in relation to offences, may, with a ſmall
ariation, be applied to other infelicities of life; [t] Brethren, if
man be overtaken with misfortunes, ye which are proſperous
elieve ſuch an one in the ſpirit of compaſſion, conſidering thy-
lf, leſt thou alſo be afflicted.

AND well might our holy religion recommend this affection to
, ſince of all others, it is one of the moſt noble and excellent
ſpoſitions of the mind: ſo noble, that the moſt generous and
ave ſpirits of antiquity, thoſe whom Paganiſm has deified, and
riſtianity ſainted, whom hiſtory mentions with honour, and
alice itſelf is aſhamed to calumniate, have all along been famed
d remarkable for it: and ſo excellent, that no other paſſion,
t love or charity, from whence it reſults, is to be compared
ith it. [u] Other paſſions are in their own natures indifferent,
ither good nor evil in themſelves, but equally determinable
either, and for the moſt part, are actually determined to the
rong ſide. They are generally irregular either in the degree,
in the object; are either miſgoverned or miſplaced; and,
hen moſt orderly managed, the higheſt character they can pre-
nd to, is only to be inſtruments and ſervants to virtue: but
w this affection of pity and compaſſion riſes higher than indif-
rency: it is of itſelf a virtuous diſpoſition, needs only actual
ertion to make it a direct virtue, and then its own excellency
ill place it among the higheſt orders. For this reaſon, I ſup-
ſe it is, that God himſelf declares, I will have mercy, and not
crifice, *i. e.* mercy, rather than ſacrifice; for when matters
l out ſo, that we cannot conveniently attend both, he had ra-
er that we ſhould teſtify our love to him by acts of kindneſs,
ne for his ſake to our brethren, whoſe neceſſities call for im-
mediate

s Heb. iv. 15. t Gal. vi. 1. u Norris's Diſcourſes, Vol. I.

mediate help, than that we ſhould neglect theſe, and emplo ourſelves in the moſt ſolemn acts of worſhip, which intirely te minate in him, who neither needs them, nor can receive any ad vantage by them; and for this reaſon not improbably it is, tha of all the affections implanted in man's mind, our bleſſed Saviou thought proper to ſelect and adopt this only in the ſacred num ber of his few beatitudes; * Bleſſed are the merciful; for the ſhall obtain mercy. Which leads us

Motives to it.

II. To the motives and inducements of our practiſing thi duty. AND to this purpoſe let it be conſidered, that, thoug mercy, as well as other virtues, may be ſometimes abuſed an ill-treated, yet, generally ſpeaking, nothing more naturally re commends us to the compaſſion of others, than being of a mer ciful and benign temper ourſelves. And for this reaſon it i that the wiſe man adviſes, [x] Give to ſeven, and alſo to eight for thou knoweſt not what evil ſhall be upon the earth: [y] as i he had ſaid, "Be careful, whilſt thou art in proſperity, to la "an obligation on as many as thou canſt by works of merc "and bounty; for thou knoweſt not how the world ma "change: riches may make themſelves wings, and fly away "and it is not in the power of all thy art and ſkill to ſtop the "in their flight, or bring them down to thy lure, when the "are once upon the wing. A raging fire, a violent ſtorm "unſeaſonable weather, undutiful children, the falſeneſs o "friends, or the malice of enemies may conſume an eſtate in "ſhort time, which thou haſt a long while been gathering "and therefore, if whilſt thou haſt it, thou art kind and merc "ful, thy kindneſs to others (ſhouldeſt thou chance to be de "prived of it) will be remembered to thy advantage, an "engage them to give into thy cup, as our Saviour expreſſe "it, [z] good meaſure, preſſed down, ſhaken together, and run "ning over."

It engages the mercy of men,

and of God

BUT if this ſhould not happen, if even mankind, whom tho haſt obliged, ſhould fail in point of gratitude; yet [a] God is no unrighteous, that he ſhould forget thy work, and labour of love in that thou haſt miniſtred to the diſtreſſed. [b] For this thing he ſhall bleſs thee in all thy works, and in all thou putte thine hand unto; [c] he ſhall deliver thee in the time o trouble; he ſhall preſerve thee from the hand of thine enemies and ſtrengthen thee on thy bed of languiſhing. For this thing he will bleſs thee in thy relations and poſterity, [d] the ſeed o the merciful ſhall be mighty on the earth, and the generatio of the upright ſhall be bleſſed; and therefore [e] caſt thy brea upon the waters (as the wiſe man elegantly expreſſes the dut of beneficence) and thou ſhalt find it after many days; for th children

* Matth. v. 7. x Eccleſ. xi. 2. y Blackhall's Sermons, Vol. I. z Luk vi. 38. a Heb. vi. 10. b Deut. xv. 10. c Pſal. xli. 1, &c. d Ibid. cxii. e Eccleſ. xi. 1.

children's children shall find the advantage of it. For this thing, he will bless thee in (what is more than all) the salvation of thine immortal soul; for as [f] he shall have judgment without mercy on him who hath shewed no mercy; so in him that hath shewed it, mercy shall rejoice against judgment, when in that great and terrible day of the Lord, he shall meet with a gracious sentence from his judge, and a kind reception in the kingdom prepared for him. And therefore, [g] to sum up all in that elegant discourse of Lactantius, concerning works of mercy and charity: "Since human nature, says he, is weaker than that of other creatures, who came into the world armed with defensive powers; therefore our wise Creator has given us a tender and merciful disposition, that we might place the safeguard of our lives in mutual assistances of one another. For being all created by one God, and sprung from one common parent, we should reckon ourselves a-kin, and conjoined to all mankind; and being ourselves obnoxious to misery, we may more comfortably hope for help in case we need it, when we are conscious to ourselves that we gave it to others. If any be hungry, then let us feed him; is he naked, let us clothe him; is he wronged by a powerful oppressor, let us rescue and relieve him. Let our doors be open to strangers, and such as have no habitation: let not our assistance be wanting to widows and orphans; and (what is a mighty instance of charity) let us redeem the captive, deliver the prisoner, visit the sick, and in case he should die, not suffer him to want the conveniency of a grave. These are the works and offices of mercy: and to prepare us for these, let us not set our heart on money, but transmit it into the heavenly treasures, where it shall be kept to our eternal advantage, under the custody of God himself." The sum of the whole argument.

SECT. IV.

Of Mercy to Mens Souls.

MERCY, as we said before, has properly misery for its object; and the miseries incident to human life are of two kinds, either such as affect the body, or such as affect the soul of man. The miseries which affect the soul are either blindness of ignorance in matters of the greatest importance; or malice and obstinacy of will in wicked and pernicious courses: to the former belongs the business of instruction; and to the latter the office of reproof; and our purpose is to see what duties are required of us, with respect to both these.

I. BLINDNESS, and ignorance in things of the highest moment for us to know, is one of the greatest miseries that can possibly The misery of an ignorant soul.

[f] James ii. 13. [g] Cave's Primitive Christianity.

possibly happen to the soul in this life: for, as souls are designed t live happy or miserable for ever, which happiness depends upo the right use of their liberty, and that upon their knowledge, how to use and determine it, it will be impossible for them to attai eternal happiness, or escape eternal misery, without knowledg to steer and direct them right. [h] And now, what a miserabl case is this, to have an eternal interest at stake, and not to know how to manage it? To be travelling on this narrow line of life which divides the boundless continents of happiness or misery and not see one step of our way before us, nor perceive whe ther we are going, until we are gone beyond all recovery Should we behold a blind man, walking upon the brink of fatal precipice, without any guide to direct his steps, and secur him from the neighbouring danger, would not our hearts ak and our bowels yearn for him? Should we not call out to him warn him of his danger, and make all the haste we could to tak him by the hand, and conduct him to a place of safety? And it not a much more deplorable sight, to see a poor ignoran wretch, walking blindfold on the brinks of hell, and, for wa of sight to direct him heavenwards, ready to blunder at ever step into the pit of destruction? Certainly, if we duly understoo the worth and value of souls, such a woful spectacle could n but affect us with commiseration, and excite us to employ a our faculties to convince him of the danger he is incurring, an to instruct him by what means he may avoid it: for this is th proper act of mercy which such a miserable case requires, vi

Instruction proper for it.

to endeavour to dispel that fatal ignorance which surroun mens minds, and to enlighten them with all the principles religion that are necessary to conduct them to eternal happine

Charity-schools.

And this, by the way, may recommend those liberal foundatio which are now so frequent in this nation, [i] whereby great nu bers of persons, by a virtuous education, are instructed in t doctrines of faith, and seasoned with the principles of pure re gion, that so, knowing their duty, and the manifold obligatio to it, they might not fall blindfold into everlasting perditio and whereby the poorer sort, that are least of all capable of i structing their children, or making any competent provision f them, have pious grounds to hope that their [k] sons may gr up as young plants, and their daughters be as the polished co ners of the temple.

How much we stand obliged, not only in fidelity to G who has committed the souls of our children and dependents our charge, and will one day require an account of them at o hands, but in mercy likewise to them, that they may not per for lack of knowledge, to inform their minds in all the dut and obligations of religion, is what we had occasion to consid

[1] befor

[h] Scott's Christian Life, Part III. [i] Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol
[k] Psal. cxliv. 12.

before; and shall only take notice farther, that besides those who are thus immediately related to us, mercy requires us to take all fair opportunities of insinuating the knowledge of divine truths to any we know destitute of it; or, if we ourselves cannot do it without incurring the imputation of impertinence or pedantry to recommend them to others, whose authority with them is greater, and from whose hands the kind office may be better taken; for what St Paul says to Timothy is applicable to all christians that have a capacity for it; [m] the servant of the Lord must be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledgment of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Of religious discourse in common conversation.

And this gives us too sad an occasion to lament the great decay of religious discourse in common conversation, though certainly the most easy and effectual way of instruction. Sermons may do good, and books may edify; but being designed for general use, they cannot come down to particular cases; they cannot suit the condition and capacities of all men: they want that life and energy, that address and insinuation, which only dwells in the tongue: [n] they are indeed but dead things, in comparison of those lively births of piety which come from the mouth in conversation, when hearts, truly touched with the love of God, communicate their light and heat, and blow up one another's dormant fires into a burning and shining flame. As iron sharpeneth iron, says Solomon, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend, *i. e.* quickens and enlivens him, and sets a new edge, both upon his wit, and upon his passions and affections. With good reason therefore does our holy religion direct that we should [o] provoke unto love, and to good works, by exhorting one another; that [p] our speech should be always with grace, seasoned with salt; and that [q] no corrupt communication should proceed out of our mouths, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

And indeed if we consider the end and design of speech, we can hardly imagine but that it was given us for higher and more material purposes than to drive bargains upon the exchange, to talk politics over a news-paper, or to hold an impertinent chat in gossiping company about cloaths, and fashions, and the little affairs and transactions of the neighbourhood. Among all the creatures under heaven, man is the only one that has reason, and the only one too that has speech; which is no obscure intimation that the one was designed to be subservient to the other. For what shall a man talk of? What subject is there worthy

[l] See the Explanation of the Fifth Commandment. Norris's Discourses, Vol. III. [m] 2 Tim. ii. 24, &c. [o] Heb. x. 24, 25. [p] Col. iv. 6. [q] Eph. iv. 29.

worthy his diſcourſe, if not that, which is at once both the per fection and diſtinction of his nature? If not that, wherein th glory of God, as well as the fate of his own and his brother' ſoul, is ſo nearly concerned? And yet, alas! if we look into th world, we ſhall find nothing leſs talked of than religion. Wicke men cannot, and good men, for fear of being accounted ſingu lar, will not make it the ſubject of their diſcourſe; ſo tha what through the indiſpoſition of the one, and the incapacity o the other, a man may make viſit after viſit, go from houſe t houſe, out of one company into another, for it may be, a twelv month together, and not hear one word of religion paſs. It no wonder indeed, if wicked men prefer the light flaſhes of wanton mirth, which, for a while, ſuſpend reflection, and hid the ſinner from himſelf, to ſuch diſcourſes as awaken co ſcience, and propheſy no good concerning them, but only ev continually; or, if men of virtue are, at any time, guilty of much weakneſs, as to appear diſpleaſed with a ſerious and i ſtructive converſation, it cannot proceed from an averſion to th argument, becauſe it is impoſſible that they ſhould really be o fended with ſuch ſubjects as are the great entertainment of the retirement; but it is the uneaſineſs they perceive in the co pany, and want of courage to oppoſe ſo corrupt a cuſtom, th makes them behave in this manner; whereas, had they reſol tion enough to attempt it, theſe fooliſh diſcouragements wou ſoon be removed. Would good men, I ſay, with the liberty an honeſt zeal, oppoſe and reprove all profane and immod freedoms in converſation, and ſtudy to promote and encoura the contrary, veneration and reſpect would attend them, a religion would ſoon improve itſelf into a faſhion. The libe tine would retire to the ſtews, and profaneneſs be confined the brothel; joy, and peace, and eſteem would bleſs the dwe ings of the righteous, and the purity and holineſs of their co verſation here would fit and prepare them for that aſſembly the firſt-born, where (inſtead of the preſent impertinencies ſociety) the excellency of the Divine Being and Perfection the order and wiſdom, the juſtice and goodneſs of his gover ment, the reaſonableneſs and equity of his laws, the pleaſantn and freedom of his ſervice, and the great inſtances of his lo eſpecially that amazing one in the redemption of the world the paſſion of his Son, ſhall be the eternal theme, whereof ſhall then diſcourſe with all mutual freedom and endearment without reſerve, without paſſion, without affection, or any thoſe little deſigns and artifices which now both diſguiſe a diſreliſh converſation *.

The miſery of a wicked ſoul.

II. THE other ſore miſery which affects the ſoul is obſtina of will in wicked and pernicious courſes. For what a deplo able ſight is this, to ſee a wretched ſoul madly purſuing its o deſtructio

* Roger's Sermons, Vol. I.

eſtruction, and forcing, as it were, its way into hell, through
ll the reſiſtances of its religion, its reaſon, and conſcience toge-
her? [r] Were we to ſee a madman break looſe from his chain,
nd run his head againſt a wall; or catching up a dagger, thruſt
into his own breaſt, and repeat ſtab after ſtab, in deſpite of all
ur counſels and diſſuaſives, ſhould we not pity and lament his
ſe, and endeavour to reſtrain him from ſuch violent outrages
gainſt himſelf? And is it not a much more lamentable ſpectacle
o ſee a wild and deſperate ſoul break looſe from thoſe ties of
eligion and conſcience which bind it to its duty and happineſs,
nd, in a deaf and obſtinate rage, ſeize on the weapons of per-
ition (for ſuch all wickedneſs is) plunge them into its own
owels, and with repeated acts of iniquity, imbrue its hands in
s own blood; whilſt the bleſſed Spirit, together with its own
atural ſenſe of God, is ſtruggling with it, and endeavouring in
ain to diſarm its deſperate fury? What merciful heart would
ot be tempted to interpoſe, in order to reſtrain it by reproof,
nd bind it down with good counſel and admonition? Now this
the proper act of mercy in the caſe before us: when we ſee
n obſtinate ſinner reſolutely purſuing his own deſtruction, we
ould endeavour, by prudent and ſeaſonable reproofs, and by
ious and compaſſionate admonitions, to reclaim him from the
rror of his way.

The mercy to be extended to it is reproof which is conſonant to reaſon,

THERE are ſome offices of humanity which thoſe, who had o other light but that of natural reaſon to guide their actions, ought themſelves obliged to perform, not only to their fami- ars, but ſtrangers, not only to their friends, but to their ene- ies. [s] To ſhew the way to travellers, who had loſt it; to arn perſons in danger of a rock, or of a precipice; to permit thers to light their lamp by ours, are particularly ſpecified as enefits, which being uſeful to thoſe that receive them, and no ays prejudicial to thoſe that give them, are to be denied to one. Now can we think ourſelves bound by the laws of hu- anity to thoſe common inſtances of kindneſs, and can we pre- nd to be exempt from others of much more importance? Does ommon humanity oblige us to put miſguided travellers into eir right way; and will not chriſtianity prevail with us to call ack thoſe wandering ſouls which have ſtrayed from the narrow aths which lead unto life, into the more wide and beaten way hich leads to deſtruction? Are we ſo careful to reſcue an un- ary voyager from the danger of ſtriking on a rock, and have e no compaſſion on thoſe who, without our interpoſal, are in mediate hazard of making ſhipwreck of a good conſcience? o we cry out, when a ſtranger is running upon a precipice, nd are we ſilent, when our brother is falling into the bottom- ſs pit? Should we think it an inſtance of ſurlineſs and barba- ty, to deny another to borrow light from our light, and is there

[r] Scott's Chriſtian Life, Part III. [s] Biſhop Smalridge's Sermons.

there no cruelty in with-holding from them [t] who ſit in dar neſs, and in the ſhadow of death, that light, which would n ſhine with leſs luſtre to us, by guiding their feet likewiſe in t way of peace.

and ſcripture. THE law of Moſes gives us this injunction; [u] Thou ſha not ſee thy brother's ox or his aſs go aſtray, and hide thyſe from them: Thou ſhalt in any caſe bring them again to t brother. Thou ſhalt not ſee thy brother's aſs or his ox f down by the way, and hide thyſelf from them; thou ſhalt ſure help him to lift them up again. And may we not apply to th caſe what St Paul ſaith in another? * Doth God take care f oxen? Or ſaith he it altogether for our ſakes? For our ſak no doubt it is written, that thoſe who, by the laws of charit are obliged to bring back a ſtrayed ſheep, and to lift up a falle ox, that belongs to their brother, ſhould think themſelves muc more obliged by the ſame law, to bring back their brother hi ſelf, when gone aſtray; and to lift him up, when fallen in the pit of deſtruction. But it is not only in parables that th duty is delivered to us; the ſcripture ſays expreſsly, [x] Tho ſhalt not hate thy brother in thine heart, thou ſhalt in any wi rebuke thy neighbour, and not ſuffer ſin upon him; where, the eye of the Moſaic law, not to rebuke our brother is to ha him, and [y] he that hateth his brother, in the eye of the chri tian law, is in darkneſs, and knoweth not whither he goet becauſe that darkneſs hath blinded his eyes. If therefore t not rebuking our brother, is hatred of him, as Moſes affirms and if the hatred of our brother is a ſign of infidelity, as St Jo aſſerts; then does the duty of reproving our brethren ſta upon as firm ground as any other in the word of God. Th law, which was given by Moſes, required it of thoſe that liv under that diſpenſation: and the grace and truth, which ca by Jeſus Chriſt, has enforced it upon all chriſtians, directing u that we ſhould [z] exhort one another daily, while it is called T day, leſt any of us ſhould be hardened through the deceitfulne of ſin: and to prevail with us to ſet about ſo good and ch ritable a work, this is the great and bleſſed encouragement whi St James has left us; [a] Brethren, if any of you err from t truth, and one convert him, let him know that he who co verted a ſinner from the error of his way, ſhall ſave a ſoul fro death, and ſhall hide a multitude of ſins. But whoſe ſins th are, that by this means are hid, is a point wherein expoſito are not ſo well agreed.

The words of St James explained. GROTIUS indeed is of opinion that they are the ſins of t converted perſon, which, upon his repentance and reformati (wherein his brother's zeal for his ſoul was under God a gre inſtrument) are all pardoned and forgiven, be they never numero

t Luke i. 79. u Deut. xxii. 1, 4. * 1 Cor. ix 9, 10. x Levit. xix.
y 1 John ii. 11. z Heb. iii. 13. a James v. 19, 20.

merous and many; but the more obvious and easy sense of e words, as well as the plain design of the apostle, seems to fer to the person converting. [b] The apostle's design was, to ut up his epistle with recommending to all christians one of e most important and useful duties, that of endeavouring the nversion and reformation of men; and he intended likewise to r them up to the practice of this virtue, by the most powerful otives that he could propose: and what are these? Why first, at he, who converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, ould first consider, that he saved a soul from death; and then condly, and chiefly, that he shall also cover a multitude of ns: but whose sins? Those of the converted person? No. hat was already said, and much more than that, in the fore- ing motive, he shall save a soul from death; for surely the ving a soul from death necessarily includes and presupposes the mission of its sins. So that the passage must be meant of his s, who makes, and not of his, who becomes the convert; d thus indeed the last clause carries a new motive in it, distinct om that of the former, and such an one as rises higher, and ore sensibly touches those to whom it is addressed. "Let such an one know (for this may be a proper paraphrase upon the apostle's words) that he shall, by this means, not only save a soul from death, though this itself be a very great and desirable thing, but what more nearly concerns him, shall also secure to himself on this account, the pardon of many sins;" not gross and heinous sins (the words of the apostle not imply that, neither can a christian, zealous for the con- rsion of others, be supposed to be guilty of such) but only any lesser neglects and failings in his duty; many sins of infir- ty, surprise, and daily incursion, which, God knows, in the st of men are too frequent, and therefore properly enough led a Multitude of Sins.

Motives to engage us in the conversion of others.

AFTER this, I need not urge the practice of our Saviour and s apostles, and what mighty pains and hazards the primitive ristians underwent, that they might bring mankind to the owledge of the truth, and rescue their souls from the snares the devil. If [c] there be joy in heaven over one sinner that penteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which ed no repentance; think, O think with what joy and holy umph must that man appear, at the day of judgment, when, the full assembly of saints and angels, it shall be reported and oclaimed aloud, that his teaching and instruction, his counsel d advice, his admonition and reproofs gave the first turn to ch an one's conversion and amendment, and was under God trumental to the salvation of his soul, and the joy and re- cing which thereupon appeared in heaven! How must his untenance shine, and his heart cheer him, when, after such commendation,

b Bishop Atterbury's Sermons, Vol. I. c Luke xv. 7.

commendation, the eyes of men and angels ſhall be turned upo him in full applauſe and admiration!

THIS one conſideration, I think, is enough to excite us al by every proper means, to endeavour the inſtruction and refo mation of the moſt ignorant and miſtaken, the moſt profligat and perverſe. [d] But if after all, as it too often happens, th one will not receive our inſtruction, nor the other endure ou reproof; yet even then, pitying and praying for them become our duty, and the worſe we find their condition, and the mor intractable their diſpoſitions, the more vehemently muſt w ſtrive with God in their behalf, that he would ſoften the hearts, and ſhew them their errors, and bring them firſt to teachable temper, and then, into the ways of holineſs and truth

SECT. V.

Of Mercy to Mens Bodies.

THE miſeries which affect mens bodies, are either natur blemiſhes and defects, accidental ſickneſs and diſeaſes, ou ward force and violence, or want and ſcarcity of the commo neceſſaries of life, about which the offices of mercy and compa ſion are differently converſant.

How we are to be affected towards men under natural blemiſhes.

1. ALL natural blemiſhes and defects, ſuch as lameneſ crookedneſs, want of ſenſes, or diſproportion of parts, are re infelicities that render our bodies either leſs uſeful to ourſelve or leſs graceful and amiable to others: and therefore, in th caſe, [e] the law of mercy requires us, not to contemn or unde value men, not to upbraid or reproach them upon that ſcore but to overlook theſe blemiſhes as inconſiderable flaws whi they could not prevent, and which they cannot rectify: to r member that the body is not the man, but the immortal mi that inhabits it; that the richeſt diamonds wear many times th roughеſt coats; and that, ſince it was not in their power to o der nature in their own compoſition, to deride or expoſe the for any miſhap or deformity therein, is like flinging ſalt in their wounds, and turning that into a triumph of mirth a drollery, which is properly an object of pity and compaſſion.

Under ſickneſs or diſeaſes.

2. SICKNESS and diſeaſes are ſore miſeries, ſuch as waſ the ſtrength of nature, rebate the vigour of the ſpirits, a make the whole body, through inceſſant pains and weakne not only uſeleſs, but burdenſome to the ſoul: in which ca the laws of mercy require us (provided our company will acceptable) to viſit the afflicted very frequently, in order cheer their drooping ſpirits with the livelineſs of our converſ tion, and to adminiſter to their wearied thoughts the ſuppor a

[d] Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels, Vol. I. [e] Scott's Chriſtian Li Part III.

and comforts of religion: to contribute what we can to their bodily eaſe and refreſhment; to be ready to ſerve them in all their neceſſities; to compaſſionate their griefs; to bear with their peeviſhneſſes; and, if they are poor and indigent, to ſupply them with all ſuch remedies as are neceſſary to their health and recovery. But above all, to take all fair opportunities to awaken in their minds ſerious thoughts and purpoſes; to prepare their ſouls for an happy death, and a glorious eternity; and, to this end, to become their advocates at the throne of grace, that the God of all power and goodneſs, in whoſe hands are the iſſues of life and death, would commiſerate their ſorrows, and refreſh their wearineſs, and either remove their ſickneſs, or ſanctify it to their eternal health.

Under outward force and violence.

3. OUTWARD force and violence, ſuch as captivity and impriſonment, are great and comprehenſive miſeries, which draw a long and heavy chain of calamities after them. When mens perſons are expoſed to the will and tyranny of their enemies, and eſpecially, when they are exaſperated againſt them upon the account of religion, what can be expected but cruel and barbarous uſage; but to be worn out with ſtripes, and hunger, and intolerable labour; and to be forced to pine away their wretched lives in unpitied anguiſh and vexation of ſoul? In which caſe mercy obliges us, when any fair opportunity is propoſed to us, to contribute to their ranſom proportionably to our ability, and to ſollicit their cauſe both with God and men; to beſeech him to ſupport and preſerve them, and to perſuade all thoſe with whom we have an intereſt to extend their liberality towards their redemption. And ſo, in the caſe of impriſonment, which indeed is but another ſort of captivity, if they are our friends and acquaintance, mercy requires us to viſit them in their ſad ſolitude and confinement, in order to divert their ſorrows, and raiſe and ſtrengthen their hopes by our converſation; to endeavour to mollify their adverſaries; if they are inſolvent, to compound their debts; and, if it be juſt and feaſible, to contribute, according to our power, to their releaſe and enlargement; for this is fulfilling the chriſtian precept, of [f] remembering them that are in bonds, as being bound with them, and thoſe which ſuffer adverſity, as being ourſelves alſo in the body.

Under poverty and want.

4. WANT of the outward neceſſaries of life is a very ſore miſery, and what mercy requires us, not only to commiſerate, but to relieve; and relieve in proportion to our abilities, and the neceſſities of the perſons that are in want. But becauſe mercy and bounty to the poor is a duty of great moment and general concern, we ſhall conſider it a little more diſtinctly: 1. As to the reaſonableneſs and excellence: 2. The manner and meaſure; and, 3. The motives and inducements of our performing it.

[f] Heb. xiii. 3.

Bounty to the poor, ſhewn from the ties of nature.

I. THAT God has implanted in our nature, and woven, as it were, into the very frame of our being, an inclination to acts of tenderneſs and compaſſion, inſomuch, that a man muſt diveſt himſelf of humanity, before he can reſiſt ſuch calls and importunities, is what we were led to obſerve in our general conſideration of the duty of mercy. [g] Now the true reaſon why this paſſion of pity was born with us, and made a part of our conſtitution is, that thereby we might be excited and ſtirred up to help and ſuccour all that are in neceſſity and diſtreſs. Our bowels do therefore naturally yearn at all miſerable objects, and we cannot help, unleſs we would deface the firſt and moſt genuine impreſſions of God upon our ſouls; we cannot help, I ſay, feeling within, ſomewhat anſwerable, and a-kin to all the miſery that we feel without, and, conſequently, we eaſe our own bowels, when we compaſſionate the miſeries, and relieve ourſelves, when we remove the afflictions of a brother. [h] Thus God and nature within us ſollicit the poor man's cauſe: our own eaſe and ſatisfaction demand from us pity and compaſſion; and the tender relentings and ſtirrings of humanity, which ariſe in every man's breaſt, do even mechanically incline us to acts of mercy and benevolence, if we will but ſtand neuter, and leave nature to her own workings.

From our relation to each other.

BUT beſides the propenſity of nature, there is a farther obligation to this duty ariſing from the near relation which every man has to the very meaneſt and moſt abject, the pooreſt and moſt miſerable of his own kind. We are all the workmanſhip of the ſame hands, made of the ſame matter, moulded in the ſame form, and copied from the ſame image, even that of God himſelf: for [i] did not he that made me, ſays holy Job, make him? And did not one faſhion us in the womb? And as one hand made us both, ſo has it made us ſo very near the ſame, that in the main eſſential ingredients of our nature, we are all one; and therefore, in uſing him well, I am kind to myſelf, and in feeding and ſupporting him, I ſuſtain and cheriſh a member of my own body: whereas, to deny bread to the hungry, lodging to the outcaſt, and covering to the naked; &c. (in the ſtrong and elegant expreſſion of the prophet) is [k] hiding a man's ſelf from his own fleſh; nay, in the phraſe of the wiſe man, it is ſomething more unnatural; for while [l] the merciful man does good to his own ſoul, ſaith he, ſhe that is cruel, troubleth his own fleſh.

BUT how ſtrictly ſoever we are obliged to this duty by the ties of nature, yet there is ſtill a more forcible obligation upon us from our ſpiritual relation and conſanguinity, as we are the children of the ſame father, born to the ſame hopes, and co-heirs of the ſame inheritance in light. For is it not fit that they ſhould

g Duke's Sermons. h Norris's Diſcourſes. i Job xxxi. 15. k Iſa. lviii. 7. l Prov. xi. 17.

ſhould partake of the bowels of man's compaſſion, who communicate with us in the everlaſting mercies of God? Who are endued with the gracious influences of the ſame ſpirit, and have the image of the ſame God, not only by nature ſtamped upon them, but by grace renewed within them? [m] Who are partakers of the ſame high calling, the ſame honourable privileges, the ſame glorious promiſes, and in ſhort, have been purchaſed and purified by the precious blood of the ſame common Saviour? Since in theſe great and ineſtimable benefits we all communicate alike, why ſhould the ſecular trifles of wealth and riches be made ſo private and particular? Eſpecially conſidering, that, as we are deſigned for a better and celeſtial country, we are but pilgrims upon earth, and all travellers upon the ſame road; where, though the greateſt may appear with a coſtlier equipage and more ſplendid retinue, yet ſtill he is but a paſſenger, taking a journey to the ſame country, where the meaneſt perſon that ſets out with him may perhaps be as great as he. [n] And is it not then extremely fooliſh and ridiculous, as well as barbarous and inhuman, for one in an opulent condition to deny ſo poor a ſum as would defray the neceſſary expences of a fellow-traveller, who at his journey's end, and in his own country (which from any of us is not far diſtant) has as great, perhaps a greater eſtate; as good, perhaps better friends and ally, than himſelf?

and preſent condition.

THUS it appears from the ſeveral relations we bear to each other, whether as men or chriſtians, that this great act of religion, the relieving the poor, is a moſt reaſonable ſervice: and therefore we need leſs wonder that we find Moſes and the prophets in the Old, and in the New Teſtament, our bleſſed Lord and his apoſtles inculcating nothing ſo often, urging nothing ſo preſſingly, recommending nothing ſo affectionately as this. The law was a diſpenſation of ſervility and fear, and had no great power to excite and improve the tender reſentments of nature; and yet we find God inſerting this precept in the very body of it: [o] if there be among you a poor man, thou ſhalt not harden thy heart, nor ſhut thine hand from thy poor brother; thou ſhalt ſurely give him, becauſe that for this thing the Lord thy God will bleſs thee in all thy works. Job in his own practice and example has ſhewn us, that perſons of large fortunes ſhould not hold the poor from their deſire, nor cauſe the eyes of the widow to fail; ſhould not eat their morſels alone, and the fatherleſs not eat thereof; ſhould not ſee any periſh without a clothing, or the poor without a covering; but order their bounty ſo, that being warmed with the fleece of their ſheep, his loins ſhould bleſs him. The royal Pſalmiſt calls upon us [p] to conſider the poor, and [q] to diſperſe our riches abroad, that the Lord may deliver us in the time of trouble. The royal Preacher exhorteth

From the word of God, both in the Old,

[m] Barrow's Works, Vol. I. [n] Duke's Sermons. [o] Deut. xv. 7, 10. [p] Pſal. xli. 1. [q] Pſal. cxii. 9.

exhorteth us [r] to cast our bread upon the waters, in order to find it after many days; and for this, in another place, he gives us this encouragement; [s] he that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord; and that which he hath given him will he pay him again: and to mention no more, the prophet Micah has made it one of the three great articles in the system of religion, [t] to love mercy; or, as another prophet has explained it, [u] that thou deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out to thine house: when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh.

and New Testament.

WELL therefore may we expect, that in a religion designed to cultivate the tender sentiments of human nature, our instructions should be, * not to lay up to ourselves treasures upon the earth, but [x] to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; [y] to abound in the grace of liberality; [z] to give to every one that asketh; and [a] if we would be perfect, to sell all that we have, and give to the poor, that so we may have treasure in heaven. This is that [b] pure religion and undefiled before God; this that [c] sacrifice wherewith he is well pleased; this is the method of expressing our love to our gracious Lord, and making him our debtor; [d] for verily I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. What a surprisingly gracious sentence is this? Can a man be profitable to God? As Job asks the question: and as Elihu; if thou be righteous, what dost thou give him? Or what does he receive at thy hands? Alas! my goodness extendeth not to thee, is the confession of the man after God's own heart: yet see here the infinite condescension of our Saviour! He has found out a way how we may give somewhat even to him that is already Lord of all; be merciful to the fountain of all mercy, and do good even to goodness itself; in that he places to his own account, and graciously accepts, as done to himself, whatever we do to his afflicted members for his sake: and for this reason he hath ordained, that since himself was to return to his heavenly Father, we should [e] have the poor always with us, that whenever we will we may do them good. Them he hath left his representatives, that we might never want whereupon to exercise our love to him, even to the end of the world: and it is by means of their poverty that we may make our riches truly blessings, as they afford us an opportunity of employing them to the best of purposes, and of setting forth the honour and love which we always owe, and ought always to be paying to our Lord.

Why the poor are ordained to be among us.

[f] IT is from no defect then, or failing of the inexhaustible stores of God's goodness, that there is such a thing as poverty among

r Eccles. xi. 1. s Prov. xix. 17. t Micah vi. 8. u Isa. lviii. 7. * Matth. vi. 19 x 1 Tim. vi. 18. y 2 Cor. viii. 7. z Luke vi. 30. a Matth. xix. 21. b James i. 27. c Heb. xiii. 16. d Matth. xxv. 40. e Mark xiv. 7. f Duke's Sermons.

ong the ſons of men. Had it been as agreeable to his in-
te wiſdom as it was eaſy to his almighty power, he might
ve made the ſame abundance and plenty common to all man-
d, and left no room for the fooliſh cavils againſt providence,
m the preſent unequal diſtribution of the good things of this
rld: or, ſince it had pleaſed God to make the world conſiſt,
t does of rich and poor, he, who, through the whole ſcrip-
e, declares ſuch a tender regard for the poor, might ſupply
ir neceſſities with his own hand. He that fed the Iſraelites
a barren wilderneſs with angel's food, and bread ſent from
aven, and preſerved their garments from wearing out or
xing old; he that fed his prophet by ravens, and bleſſed the
or widow's handful of meal and cruiſe of oil, ſo that neither
ſted nor failed, could ſtill (if he ſaw it good) without calling
the help of the rich, relieve all the wants of his creatures
nſelf, but therefore he chuſes to wave his almighty power,
d to ſend man to man for relief and ſupport, not only that he
ght make trial of our faith and affection to him, but that he
ght endear us likewiſe to each other, and diffuſe continually
rough the whole intelligent creation a divine principle of mu-
l love. As then the poor are the repreſentatives of Chriſt
his weak and ſuffering humanity, ſo the charitable rich, who
d and ſuſtain them, may be ſaid to repreſent him in his pow-
ful and all-ſufficient divinity. They ſupply the place of an
traordinary providence: they are inſtead of God to their in-
gent brethren; and, if they take care to give every one his
rtion of meat in due ſeaſon, their reward ſhall be commenſurate
their talents. And ſo we proceed to the conſideration

II. Of ſome of the methods and meaſures of performing this charity. [g] When thou doſt thine alms, ſays our bleſſed Lord, do
t ſound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the
nagogues, and in the ſtreets, that they may have glory of men;
t when thou doſt alms, let not thy left-hand know what thy
ht-hand doth, that thine alms may be in ſecret. And, indeed,
that relieves the neceſſities of others out of a virtuous prin-
ple, out of gratitude to God, and a tender compaſſion for hu-
n nature in diſtreſs, as he will eſteem the divine approbation
re than all the applauſes of men, ſo will he be very tender
making his bounty a reproach, or expoſing the poverty he
ieves, by divulging his charity; and will therefore give it ſe-
tly and privately. He will conſider, that as God has made
n a ſteward and diſpenſer of his bounty to the poor, after his
n conveniencies, and thoſe that depend on him are ſerved,
e remainder belongs to them; and, in ſtating this account
e will not extend his conveniencies beyond their juſt dimen-
ns, but abate what he decently can of his ſuperfluous ex-
nces, and of that needleſs pomp and ceremony which his ſta-
tion

The manner wherein we are to give our alms.

g Matth. vi. 2, &c. h Scott's Chriſtian Life, Part III.

tion and character require not, and will thereupon give liberal and bountifully. He will be thankful to God for the kind distinction of his providence, for having made his cup to overflow and given him lands which he laboured not, and vineyards and olive-yards, which he planted not, whilst others remain in poverty and want. He sees their wants press them hard, and that the longer he delays their relief, the longer he continues their griefs and miseries upon them; and therefore he gives readily and chearfully. [i] He considers his own mortality, and the uncertainty of human affairs, whereby he may be deprived of the opportunity of doing the good he designs, and being not so well satisfied that posthumous deeds of this kind will please the living God, he watches all occasions, such as times of sickness, scarceness of work, dearness of provision, &c. when men's wants and necessities call loudest for relief; and thus he gives timely and seasonably. And lastly, because the number of miserable people is too great for one to relieve, he considers where the greatest necessities and the greatest obligations are, and consequently gives the preference to christians before heathens; to those of his own, before those of a different family and communion; to good men before the wicked; and to God's poor (whom the divine providence, by sickness or losses, hath made objects of charity) to the poor of their own making, who by idleness, and luxury, and vice has reduced to want and misery; and thus he gives discreetly and prudently.

Other instances of mercy to the poor.

THESE are the conditions that make the sacrifice of alms both grateful to the receiver, and acceptable to God. But, besides the duty of alms-giving, there are several others, such as assisting the oppressed, releasing the insolvent, and lending freely and without usury upon some occasions that are included in our mercy to the poor, and are very proper and significant expressions of it. Our assisting the oppressed is enjoined by Solomon in these words: [k] if thou forbear to deliver them who are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; and if of any other injury or oppression occasioned by the violence of lawless men, if thou sayest behold we know it not, excusing thy uncompassionate carelessness by a pretended ignorance, doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? And he that keepeth thy soul doth not he know it? And shall not he render to every man according to his works? Our releasing the insolvent from their debt or confinement, is what our blessed Saviour has sufficiently intimated in the parable of the unmerciful servant, who when his lord had frankly remitted him a debt, which he was by no means capable of paying, laid hold on his poor fellow-servant for a trifling sum; and, notwithstanding his submissions and intreaties, hurried him to prison, for which he is reproached by his lord; [l] O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt

i Gardiner's Sermons. k Prov. xxiv. 11, 12. l Matth. xviii. 32.

ot, becauſe thou deſiredſt me; ſhouldeſt thou not alſo have had mpaſſion on thy fellow-ſervant, even as I had pity on thee? ur lending freely and without uſury is an injunction likewiſe our Saviour's; for [m] love your enemies, ſays he, and do od, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward ll be great. But, becauſe ſome diſputes have riſen among ines concerning the matter of uſury, it may not be amiſs in s place to determine the point, and ſettle its proper limitations.

Uſury forbid among the Jews, and why; but in itſelf not unlawful.

THAT the Jews were forbidden to lend to the poor upon ury, is manifeſt from this one paſſage among many others; f thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen to decay with thee, e no uſury of him, nor increaſe, but fear God, that thy other may live well with thee. Nay, that the ſame prohibi- n was extended to the rich as well as the poor, ſo long as y were Iſraelites, is evident from that remarkable paſſage in euteronomy: [o] Thou ſhalt not lend upon uſury to thy bro- r; uſury of money, uſury of victuals, uſury of any thing t is lent upon uſury. Unto a ſtranger thou mayeſt lend upon ry, but unto thy brother thou ſhalt not lend upon uſury, t the Lord thy God may bleſs thee in all that thou ſetteſt ne hand unto. We may obſerve however, that there can no moral and intrinſic evil in uſury, becauſe God allows m to require it of ſtrangers, though they were not to do it any immoderate or exceſſive manner, in which ſenſe we may derſtand that prohibition ſo frequently repeated, [p] Thou ſhalt vex a ſtranger, nor oppreſs him; for ye were ſtrangers in land of Egypt.

[*] Now the true reaſon why the Jews were permitted to e uſury of ſtrangers, and not of their brethren, is this, that ir heathen neighbours, as [q] is plain of Tyre and Zidon, re merchants that improved their money by trade, and refore it was fit that they ſhould pay a moderate intereſt for but the Jews, maintaining no foreign commerce with other ions, had no occaſion to borrow money, but to ſupply their ſent wants, and to take advantage of the neceſſities of the r, to increaſe their own fortunes by increaſing their neigh- r's poverty, was againſt all the laws of goodneſs and cha- ; and therefore this uſury, which was the only uſury known thoſe days, is ſtrictly forbidden. All other kinds of uſury introduced by trade and commerce: and though it is againſt rity to lend upon uſury to men, who borrow to ſupply their nts; yet, if men borrow to increaſe their trade and fortunes, re is juſtice and equity in it, that the lender ſhould make e increaſe of his money as well as the borrower: and ac- dingly, our bleſſed Saviour, in the anſwer he gives to the vant who hid his talent in a napkin, ſeems to juſtify this pro- cedure:

[m] Luke vi. 35. [n] Lev. xxv. 35, &c. [o] Deut. xxiii. 19, 20. [p] Exod. . 21. [*] Sherlock's Sermons, Vol. I. [q] Iſa. xxiii. 2.

cedure: [r] Thou oughteſt to have put my money to the e changers, and then at my coming, I ſhould have received mi own with uſury.

THE ſum of our inquiry is this,—That though uſury is e preſsly prohibited under the Jewiſh law, and [s] comes ſom times in company with many groſs enormities; yet, having moral turpitude in it, and being not forbidden by the goſpe being accounted expedient in matters of trade, and to many th have no other way of ſubſiſting, abſolutely neceſſary (whatev the Jews, who had no opportunities of trafficking with mone might be required to do) in countries whoſe whole wealth a ſupport depend upon commerce, and the produce of their m ney, it can never juſtly be deemed an iniquity to make a moder gain thereby, provided always that ſuch as are in poverty a neceſſity be not concerned. To theſe we muſt lend witho uſury, nay, to theſe we muſt lend hoping for nothing agai the plain ſenſe of which precept is this, that [t] where a perſo under the preſſure of great neceſſity, ſhall come to us, and ſire to borrow ſuch a ſum of money as his preſent circumſtan require, provided we can ſpare it, and if the providence of G render the perſon unable to repay us, we can diſpenſe with loſs of it, we ought not to refuſe ſuch a ſeaſonable charity this, or be afraid of lending, becauſe we run probably a haza of never being paid again; but, on the contrary, ſhould fre and chearfully ſupply him, with a reſolution to loſe it, if G never enables him to repay us. This is the duty; and come now

Except to the poor.

III. To ſome of the motives and encouragements to And to this purpoſe let it be conſidered, that of all the g things we do, there is none that gives that true comfort delectation to the mind as a ſeaſonable refreſhment to wretched and neceſſitous. For, when I ſee a man ſtrugg with want, and groaning under a heavy burden of poverty, relieve him, I eaſe and refreſh my own yearning bowels; the human nature within me, which is common to us both, a kind of ſympathetic motion, exalts and raiſes up itſelf, ſwells with a generous pleaſure: I find an eaſe of mind, a c placency of ſpirit, and a ſecret irreſiſtible joy ſpringing up in breaſt. All the good which I deſigned to ſhed abroad, part with to my poor brother, recoils back upon myſelf, the comfort I feel within, confirms me in the truth of this ſition of our bleſſed Saviour, that it is more bleſſed to give t to receive.

Motives and encouragements to our bounty to the poor. As the pleaſure,

MEN may pretend a danger of exhauſting their ſubſtance too liberal contributions, but let us a little conſult experie * Who ever knew an eſtate impaired by charity? By love

the ſecurity.

r Matth. xxv. 27. s See Jer. xv. 10, &c. Ezek. xviii. 7, &c. Pſalm xv. 5
t Gardiner's Sermons. * Duke's Sermons.

our brethren? But, by love of ourſelves, how many? By luxury, by prodigality, by the love of the world, by the very deſire of increaſing and multiplying, how many? Theſe are the wings that riches moſt uſually take to themſelves when they fly away; and then, as the wiſe man ſpeaks, [u] what profit hath he that laboureth for the wind? The beſt and ſecureſt way then to fix theſe uncertain and fleeting things, is to lay them up where it is impoſſible they ſhould be loſt. [x] They may be loſt while they are at home; for while they are at home, in truth they are abroad, and at adventures; ſailing among perilous ſtorms, and rocks, and pirates, and can never be ſafe until they be brought to this port, and inſured this way: for the poor man's belly is a granary for our corn, which can never be exhauſted; the poor man's back is a wardrobe for our clothes, which can never be pillaged; and the poor man's pocket is a bank for our money, which can never break or deceive us.

And profit of it.

WHAT we give to the poor is laid up in heaven, whither no thief can climb, and where no moth or ruſt doth abide; and therefore, in deſpite of all the fortune, all the might, all the malice of the world, the liberal man will ever be rich, who has God's providence for his eſtate, God's power for his defence, God's favour for his reward, and God's promiſe for his aſſurance, that [y] he who giveth to the poor, ſhall not lack; that [z] the liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat; and [a] that he, who deviſeth liberal things, by liberal things ſhall he ſtand. [b] Lay up thy treaſure therefore, ſays the wiſe ſon of Syrach, according to the commandments of the moſt High, and it ſhall bring thee more profit than gold. Riches, that are kept, profit not in the day of wrath; but ſhut up alms in thy ſtore-houſes, and they ſhall deliver thee from all affliction: eſpecially in the great and momentous times of death and judgment, when, as the royal Pſalmiſt ſays, [c] Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the poor, the Lord ſhall deliver him in time of trouble; the Lord ſhall preſerve him and keep him alive, and he ſhall be bleſſed upon earth; the Lord ſhall ſtrengthen him upon the bed of languiſhing, and make all his bed in his ſickneſs: and when, as our gracious Saviour ſays, Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world; for I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat; thirſty, and ye gave me drink; naked, and ye clothed me; ſick, and ye viſited me; in priſon, and ye came unto me: or at leaſt, in as much as ye did it to one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye did it to me; and therefore come unto me, ye bleſſed of my Father.

u Eccleſ. v. 16. x Barrow's Works, Vol. I. y Prov. xxviii. 27. z Ibid. xi. 25. a Iſa. xxxii. 8. b Eccluſ. xxix. 11. c Pſal. xli. 1.

CHAP. III.

Our Duty to ourſelves; and,

1. Of the Government of our Thoughts.

Our duty to ourſelves.

THE duty which we owe to ourſelves ſeems chiefly to conſiſt in the right ordering and management of the two conſtituent parts of our nature, ſoul and body, *i. e.* in the direction of our thoughts, [a] in the ſubmiſion of our wills, in the regulation of our paſſions, in the government of our tongues, in the ſubjection of our bodies, and in the renewal and ſanctification of our whole nature.

I. KEEP thy heart with all diligence is the advice of the wiſe man, [b] who, according to the current opinion of the antient philoſophy, taking the heart for the chief ſeat of the ſoul, and the inſtrument of its moſt noble operations, ſets it to ſignify our inward thoughts and affections, which we are to keep, or attend to with all diligence, becauſe out of them are the iſſues, *i. e.* the fruits and effects which appear in our lives and converſations. Since the goodneſs or badneſs of our lives then does altogether depend upon the good or bad government of our thoughts and inclinations, it may not be improper, 1. To conſider what power God has given us over theſe inward motions of our minds; and, 2. Wherein the art of governing them does conſiſt.

What power we have over our thoughts.

THAT God has given us ſome power over the thoughts and affections of our minds, cannot be diſputed: but then, becauſe ſome people, by the very principles of their make and conſtitution, as others, by long uſage and frequent trials, are better qualified for this government than others, and, according to ſeveral contingencies of outward things, have, at ſome times, a greater command over their paſſions than at others; it cannot be expected that any particular reſolution ſhould be anſwerable to all theſe caſes: and therefore all that we can do muſt be to lay down ſome ſuch general propoſitions as may comprehend moſt of them: and to this purpoſe, it ſeems very manifeſt,

Little or none over the firſt motions of our minds.

I. THAT the firſt motives of our minds are very little, if at all, under our power and dominion. [c] By the firſt motions of our minds we mean thoſe ſudden thoughts or apprehenſions, thoſe involuntary paſſions and deſires, which are excited in our minds by any object that is at that time preſented to our imagination: and theſe we are not ſo much maſters of ourſelves as to be able to ſtop, even though they ſhould chance to be irregular, becauſe they are produced ſo very quick; they take poſſeſſion

a The ſubmiſſion of our will we have treated of in our duty towards God page 319. b Barrow's Works, Vol. II. c Sharp's Sermons, Vol. I.

ession of the mind before the mind is apprehensive of them, before the judgment is awakened, and reason alarmed to make a timely interposure. Thus, upon a great provocation, a man of a passionate temper cannot avoid feeling a sudden resentment of anger; upon hearing himself commended, a man that desires to be well thought of cannot but entertain some vanity of imagination; and, when all the temptations are set before him, a man addicted to his pleasures can hardly prevent some secret irregular inclinations towards them. He may indeed (as he ought to do) suppress these irregularities when he perceives them rising in his breast; and, by long consideration, and a serious exercise of himself in the ways of godliness, make those that were formerly temptations to him in time become none at all: but, as for the first motions and workings of his mind, these he can no more prevent than he can alter his temper, or evade the circumstances that do surround him; and therefore the art of ruling his thoughts does not lie here.

2. AND as the first motions of our minds are excepted from our power and jurisdiction, so, from the presence of some outward object, the violence of some inward passion, or the temper and indisposition of a man's body, it very frequently happens that he loses the free command of his thoughts, and fancies and imaginations are forced upon him whether he will or no. When a man, for instance, is under a sharp tormenting pain, as he cannot avoid feeling, so neither can he forbear thinking of it: when he is full of grief for the loss of some dear relation, or transported with passion for some unworthy treatment; until his passions cool, and the impressions that caused them are abated, it is in vain to bid him forget these grievances; for the nature of man is such, that, when it is once engaged in warm thoughts about any matter, it is very hard, if not impossible for it, to disengage itself on a sudden. The like is to be said, not only in all sorts of distempers, where the brain is visibly disturbed, but even in the case of some deeply hypochondriac persons, who are often known to be haunted with a set of imaginations and fancies that destroy their inward peace and tranquillity of mind, and yet such as they can by no means get quit of, though they desire it never so impatiently; and therefore the art of governing their thoughts does not lie here neither.

WELL: but if a man be such a slave to his thoughts; if, from the complexion of his body, outward objects, and inward passions, fancies and imaginations are so obtruded upon him, that he cannot controul them, would he never so fain, the great question is, wherein does this boasted liberty of thinking consist? And to this we answer,

3. THAT, excepting the cases already mentioned, we have a liberty of thinking; which liberty consists in bending our thoughts, and applying our minds more vigorously to one kind of

Wherein it properly consists.

of object than another. Thus, of the multitude of objects tha occur to our minds, it is in our power to determine which o them we will dwell upon; and, when we have pitched upo any one, it is farther in our power to determine how long and in what degree we will attend to it; whether we will pur sue it with the utmost vigour of our minds, or with some indif ference and remissness. In this, as we conceive it, consists th very nature of our freedom of thinking; but then,

And wherein the morality of our thoughts.

4. THERE is a farther power we have over our minds, mor especially to be considered, because, in the good or ill use of it the very foundation of all our virtue or vice is laid. We canno indeed, in many cases, think always of what we would; nay we cannot oftentimes hinder abundance of thoughts from takin possession of our minds, whether we will or no; but this w certainly can do; we can assent to our thoughts, or deny ou consent to them; when any suggestion arises in our minds, w can observe its nature and tendency, and accordingly cherish o reject it. And here it is that the morality of our thoughts be gins; according as we assent or dissent to the motion that i made in our minds, so will our thoughts put on the nature o virtue or vice.

WHEN any temptations are presented to us from without we cannot perhaps, on such occasions, but feel an irregular pa sion or inclination stirring within us; but yet, at that very time it is in our power whether we will comply with these passion and inclinations or not; whether we will consent to them o not; whether we will pursue them any farther or not.[d] Now if we do not consent to them, but endeavour to stop, and stifle and resist them, as soon as we are aware of them, there is n harm done. Our thoughts, how indecent and irregular soeve they were, are rather to be accounted the infirmities of our na ture; the bruises we contracted by our fall, than any sins o ours, properly so called. But then, on the other side, if w consent to any wicked motion or inclination that we feel in our selves (let it come in how it will, never so suddenly, never s unexpectedly) if we close with any thought that prompts us t evil, so as to be pleased with it, to delight in it, and to think o pursuing it, till it be brought into action; in that case we ar no longer to plead our original corruption; for, in that ver instant, we become actual sinners, actual transgressors of th law of God, whose obligation extends to our hearts and thought as well as our outward actions; though it must be allowed we ar not so great transgressors, while our sin continues in the thoug and intention only, as when it proceeds to outward action; for th is the gradation wherein the apostle has described it; 'Ever man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, an enticed; then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

II. THI

d James i. 14, 15.

II. THIS I take to be the true meaſure of that power and thority which God has given us over our thoughts: and from nce we may, 1. In the firſt place, lay it down for a certain e, that the way to ſecure the government of them is to be ways upon our watch, and attending to the firſt motions and rkings of our minds, that, whenever we find them tending to y thing that is forbidden, we may ſtop and reſtrain them as n as we can. We cannot indeed (as we ſaid before) prevent egular paſſions and deſires from ariſing in our minds upon dry occaſions, but this we can do; as ſoon as we are aware them, we can refuſe our conſent to them (and in that caſe, is to be hoped, they will not be imputed to us as ſins) nay, only ſo, but we can reſtrain them from breaking out, or wing themſelves in our words and actions; for the motions our outward members are all at our command, though the firſt tions of our minds be not. Here therefore will lie a great nt in the art of governing our thoughts. We cannot per-ps, for inſtance, prevent a ſudden paſſion of anger from riſing our minds, upon ſundry occaſions; but, as ſoon as we feel s paſſion, we can ſeal up our mouths, ſo that it ſhall not vent lf in unſeemly words; and if we withdraw the fuel from new-kindled fire, it will extinguiſh of itſelf; whereas, if we fer it to break out into bitter ſpeeches and expreſſions, it will ne beyond meaſure. The like is to be ſaid of any impure cies or deſires which may be excited in us occaſionally. It s not perhaps in our power to keep them from coming into minds, but it is in our power to withdraw from the temp-ion that occaſioned them, and to endeavour to direct our ughts to ſome other object, or at leaſt, not to proceed one in any outward action towards the accompliſhment of them; if we take this courſe, the diſturbance of our minds will n abate, and we return to our ordinary tempers again.

The method of governing them.

1. By attending to them at firſt.

2. IF ever we deſire to keep our thoughts under due re-ation, there are two things that we muſt have an eſpecial e to avoid, idleneſs and looſe company; for both of theſe ſtrangely unhinge a man's mind, diſarm it of that ſeverity ich is its beſt defence againſt evil thoughts, and expoſe it, as eaſy prey, to every temptation that will attack it. What-r therefore mens circumſtances and quality may be, ſome ful way or other ſhould be found out, whereby thoſe many rs, which, for want of a ſettled buſineſs, might otherwiſe loſt or miſ-ſpent, may be expended innocently at leaſt, if not vantageouſly. And, believe me, what vaſt improvements in ers parts of knowledge might thoſe men make who have e at their command, and may enjoy privacy and ſolitude, en, and as long as they pleaſe! This however would be the mediate conſequence: that by keeping the mind continually exerciſed

2. By avoiding idleneſs and bad company.

exercised and employed, it would not be at leisure to admit
lawful thoughts into its presence; whereas idleness, and h
ing nothing to do, is the mother of those vain, unprofitab
and sinful fancies, wherein some men spend their days. Tem
tations, alas! too frequently come in our way, whether we w
or no, but the idle man is forced to seek out temptations
the shipwreck of his virtue; and therefore no wonder, if, i
world stored with variety of such as are suited to every on
disposition, the man that seeks for them finds abundance; a
as he finds abundance, so he is left naked and defenceless to e
ry one that comes in his way. [f] I went, says Solomon, by t
field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of u
derstanding; and lo! it was all grown over with thorns, a
nettles had covered the face thereof: for though the wor
may be explained in a literal sense, yet, as it is usual for the
spired penmen to describe heavenly and spiritual things by se
sible representations; so is there no question but that Solom
had a farther and more noble design in these words: name
to shew us that there is nothing more apt to choak and destr
the good seed of religion, or to contribute to the growth of
manner of sin and impiety, than an habit of idleness.

And truly loose and impertinent conversation, which was t
other thing we mentioned, though it looks something with a b
ter grace, yet it is not of so much better consequence:
wherever it is much used, it will so emasculate a man's mi
and take off the edge and vigour of it, as to all serious concer
that he will not easily get it into a good frame again. E
communications, says St Paul, corrupt good manners: a
therefore those people who spend a great part of their time
gadding up and down, in play, in merry-meetings, in telling a
hearing idle stories, and the like, must necessarily have th
thoughts and inclinations of the same piece, *i. e.* very froth
very light and foolish, not to say prophane and wicked, a
atheistical too, if the company they converse with be of t
complexion.

3. By making religion our chief concern.

3. If ever we intend to order our thoughts to good p
poses, above all things we must be mindful to make that
business of our lives, which is indeed our greatest concern, a
ought therefore to be our principal design. What that is,
need no detail of arguments to prove, since it is evident to e
ry one who believes he has an immortal soul to save, that
great concern of all is, to approve himself to that God w
made him, who disposes of all his affairs, and who, accordi
ly as he endeavours, or not endeavours to serve him, will m
him inconceivably happy or miserable to all eternity. Now
we be so wise as really to propose the service of God, and
salvation of our souls, as our main end, and resolve to mind a
foll

[f] Prov. xxiv. 30, 31.

ow it accordingly, we have made a very conſiderable ſtep to-
rds the obtaining a ſecurity to ourſelves, that the greateſt part of
thoughts and affections will be ſuch as are acceptable to God,
ought to be ſatisfactory to ourſelves. For ſince our natures
ſo contrived, that they muſt always be thinking on ſome-
ng or other, and yet are ſo contrived withal, that we think
ſt on that which is moſt in our eſteem and purſuit; what-
r it is that we make our main buſineſs, or place our chief
ight in, upon that will our thoughts run, upon that will our
res, our inclinations, our affections be fixed. The man, for
ance, that has ſet his heart on money, and makes it the great
ineſs of life to become rich, finds it ſo far from being difficult
keep his mind ſteady to his main intereſt, as he calls it, that
difficulty lies in thinking of any other matter. The man
t is given up to pleaſure and debauch, puts no force or
lence upon himſelf in thinking and contriving all the
long how he may bring to paſs the gratifications of his
ts and appetites. Did we but then make the ſervice of
d, and the attainment of heaven and happineſs, as much
buſineſs, our end, our deſign, as theſe men make wealth
pleaſures to be theirs, we ſhould certainly be thus
ected: the common courſe of our thoughts would naturally
d eaſily, without the leaſt conſtraint or violence, run upon theſe
jects. For I cannot for my life apprehend what charms there
be in worldly and ſenſual things, to attract a man's mind,
at fetters there can be in them, to bind down the thoughts,
d tie them to themſelves, but that there are the ſame, or
ch greater in virtue and goodneſs; in the love and favour of
d; in a pure conſcience here, and eternal happineſs hereafter;
ways provided that they are as much made the objects of our
ice and purſuit as the other.

4. ANOTHER excellent rule for the good government of our thoughts is, that we would live under a conſtant ſenſe of God's preſence and inſpection over us. It is impoſſible to enumerate the ſeveral ridiculous fancies wherewith the imagination amuſes itſelf; yet we pleaſe ourſelves, that whatever the inward ſtate and diſorder of our minds may be, thoſe we converſe with know nothing of the matter. And indeed it is wiſely deſigned by providence that we cannot ſee one another's thoughts; for if, notwithſtanding all the arts of hypocriſy and diſſimulation, men cannot, on ſeveral occaſions, forbear to render themſelves diſtaſteful and offenſive; how intolerable would they appear to one another, if all their vain and aſpiring, all their envious and revengeful, all their covetous and carnal thoughts ſhould open without diſguiſe? But in the mean time, that we are ſo careful, not only to hide our ſecret criminal inclinations, but to put on the falſe colours of virtue, he that made the eye, ſhall not

4. By living under a ſenſe of God's preſence.

not he ſee? And, if he do ſee, ſhall not he puniſh? [h] Hell a deſtruction are before the Lord, how much more then the hea of the children of men?

THESE are ſome of the rules that are generally preſcrib for the good government of our thoughts: and to give them greater power and efficacy, there are ſome particular exerci proper to be recommended on this occaſion; ſuch as readi the holy ſcriptures, and other good books; frequent meditati on religious ſubjects; and above all, devout and conſtant pray to God, that he would be pleaſed to ſend his holy Spirit in our ſouls, in order to illuminate our underſtandings, and ſanc fy our wills; [i] to ſearch us, and to know our hearts; to try and know our thoughts; to ſee if there be any wicked way us, and to lead us into the way everlaſting.

Of Religious Meditation.

Meditation what.

UNDER the government of our thoughts, may very w be reduced the particular act or exerciſe of meditatio which conſiſts in a ſerious conſideration of matters relating religion, that are diſcovered and ſet before us, to the end th we may receive advantage, by fixing our thoughts upon the and thereby becoming more pious and holy: and, in order explain this duty, we ſhall, 1. Obſerve what are the prop objects of it; and then, 2. Endeavour to recommend it to pr tice, by the conſideration of its excellence and uſefulneſs.

The proper objects of it. Ourſelves.

1. MEDITATION is called by the antients, the Soul's co verſing with itſelf; its contemplating its own nature, and i flecting upon its own actions; and therefore the firſt work th it puts us upon, is to conſider the ineſtimable worth and val of our immortal ſpirits; and what the great buſineſs for wh they were ſent into this world is: to remember that the ſt we are now in is but a ſtate of trial, in order to another wor and that therefore it nearly concerns us to know how we provided for it: to weigh and conſider, how frail, how unc tain our life is, a vapour, that appears but a little, and then gone; but that, after death, moſt certainly comes judgmen to repreſent to our imaginations the diſmal ſcene of the laſt d how impartial the judge is before whom we muſt appear; a how ſevere the inquiſition will be into all our actions: to pond it in our minds, that we ſhall then be conſigned either to that p fect bliſs and happineſs which are in the manſions of glory, to that unſpeakable woe and miſery which is the juſt reward the impenitent in the regions of darkneſs: and becauſe the et nity of thoſe two ſtates is that which makes the one ſo deſirab and the other ſo terrible, it will nearly concern us to be ve frequent and ſerious in our conſideration of what it is to live ev

h Prov. xv. 11. i Pſal. cxxxix. 23, 24.

ver in the presence of God, what to live with everlasting urnings.

THUS our own nature and concerns afford us matter worthy ur meditation, and much more then may we find it in the nare and attributes of God: in his omnipotence, whereby he eated the world at first, and continues to maintain it in its beg: in his omniscience, whereby he not only takes notice of all vents, but has a perfect knowledge of them, before they come pass: in his wisdom, whereby he so governs and disposes of l things, that they ultimately redound to his glory, and the ood of mankind: in his goodness, whereby he shews himself nd to his creatures: in his justice, whereby he severely ani- adverts on those that transgress his laws: in his immensity, hereby he fills all places, but is contained in none; and, in his mmutability, whereby he is always the same, without any ariableness or shadow of change. God's nature.

THUS the nature of God gives scope for our sublimest oughts, and most exalted contemplations; and, in like man- r, his works, whether of creation, providence, or redemption, e the deserved objects of our meditation. "Look up to the heavens (was [k] the advice of some antient philosophers) and observe the order, and constant course of the bright luminaries placed there, because those illustrious spectacles are visible arguments, and shining demonstrations of the greater glory of him that made them." Look down upon the air, e earth, the sea, and all the things contained in them; observe eir admirable frame and composition, and the excellent ends d uses for which they were designed; nay, observe the make d contexture of the least and meanest animals, that vast va- ety of their kinds, and the wonderful instinct of their natures; ow the stork knoweth her appointed time, and the turtle, d the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their com- g; and [m] by these things that are made and visible, the in- ible things of God, *i. e.* his eternal power, and wisdom, and odness will be clearly seen and understood. His works of creation.

FROM the works of the creation, we may proceed to those of ovidence, and for some time dwell upon this comfortable thought d reflection, that, notwithstanding the strange vicissitudes, d surprising changes, that we may observe, God rules among e children of men; that [n] the eyes of all wait upon him, and giveth them their meat in due season; that he openeth his nd, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing, [o] filling eir hearts with food and gladness: for certainly this common d large provision which is made for mankind, may justly en- rtain our thoughts; and a pleasant meditation it needs must Providence.

[k] This, Antoninus tells us (Lib. XI.) was the advice of the Pythagoreans. [l] Jer. viii. 7. [m] Rom. i. 20. [n] Psal. cxlv. 15. [o] Acts xiv. 17.

be to obſerve how this great family of the world is every da taken care of and ſupplied.

Redemption. FROM the works of providence we may ſtill advance to nobler theme, the work of our redemption; and here we ſha find occaſion to cry out with the apoſtle, O the depth of th riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! When w conſider how, by the wilful apoſtacy of our firſt parents, we ar all defiled with ſin, and thereby made liable to the divine wrath how our bleſſed Saviour undertook to appeaſe this wrath, b removing our pollution and defilement firſt, then our guilt an obnoxiouſneſs to puniſhment, and ſo putting us in a ſtate o ſalvation and happineſs; how, to effect this, though being the eter nal Son of God, he vouchſafed to clothe himſelf with fleſh, and t aſſume our human nature; to live a poor obſcure life, and ſuf fer a painful and ignominious death for our ſake, and in ou ſtead; how, by his infinite and irreſiſtible power, he roſe fro the dead in a ſhort time, after that, aſcended into heaven, an thence ſent down his holy Spirit to furniſh his church with a gifts and graces; and, laſtly, how the aſſiſtance of this Spiri the acceptance of our prayers, the favour of God, our adoption our juſtification, and eternal glory in the manſions above, are a the bleſſed fruits of this redemption. Theſe are the great an aſtoniſhing things which even the glorious angels deſire to loo into; and much more then is it our buſineſs and employmen to be thoroughly acquainted with them. And to this purpoſe another object of our meditation is the word, as well as th works of God; for there we are entertained with thoſe ſublim doctrines, thoſe divine and heavenly truths, which are not t be found in the volumes of other authors. There is hiſtory the moſt antient in the world, and on whoſe authority we ma intirely depend: there are precepts, and commands, and rule of life, ſuch as none of the maſters of ethics could ever preſcribe there are promiſes to ſolace and refreſh our minds; there ar menaces to curb our appetites, and alarm our fears; and ther in ſhort, is every thing that deſerves our care and contemplation

The word of God.

THUS we have chalked out a path for our religious medita tions, and come now to conſider the great excellency and uſ fulneſs of this exerciſe; 1. As it is a preſervative againſt evil and, 2. An incitement to all manner of good.

The excellency of meditation

II. IT is a ſevere reflection upon human nature, that, whic the prophet delivers from the mouth of God, [p] the ox knowet his owner, and the aſs his maſter's crib, but Iſrael do not know me; does not take notice of God, does not ob ſerve his laws, does not obey his precepts: all his boaſte knowledge and prerogative of reaſon does him no good; do not make him ſo obſervant of his heavenly Maſter, as the ox o the aſs are of their feeders; and the reaſon of all follows, M peopl

To preſerve us againſt ſin.

[p] Iſaiah i. 3.

eople will not conſider: [q] for it is the want of conſideration, ore than want of knowledge, that is the great ſpring of mens iſorders. Few are ſo ignorant as not to know that exceſs nd drunkenneſs are great and enormous crimes, and yet they uſtomarily run into theſe, becauſe they will not entertain any eliberate thoughts about the matter. The common ſwearer annot but have heard that God will not hold that perſon guilt-eſs who taketh his name in vain; and yet what he has heard roves of no uſe, for want of a ſerious conſideration. The nclean perſon has frequently been told, that whoremongers nd adulterers God will judge; and yet he continues in his ewdneſs, becauſe he gives himſelf no time to ponder his actions: whereas, did but theſe ſeveral ſinners conſider ſeriouſly, that [r] at he revelation of the righteous judgment of God, he will pour ut indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh, upon every oul of man, that doth evil; they durſt no more ſtop a thunder-olt, as it comes roaring from the clouds, than run into theſe erpetrations deliberately, and in cold blood.

[s] THE reaſons of ſin are not ſo ſtrong as to carry us to the ommiſſion of it with a free and voluntary conſent; but the emptations to it are uſually ſo ſudden, that they hurry away ur paſſions before underſtanding can bethink herſelf to lay hold n her reins, and interpoſe her authority. Our ſouls, in this aſe are like a ſhip blown away by a ſudden guſt of wind, while ſhe lies looſe from her anchor; whereas, had her anchor een caſt, ſhe could have ſtood the wind, and continued ſafe in he harbour. Now meditation is likewiſe caſting the anchor: t compoſes the paſſions, and keeps the ſoul ſteady, while ſhe ebates the nature of the action that is before her, and, accord-ngly, as ſhe perceives its quality is, takes the reſolution either f purſuing, or declining it.

[t] BUT beſides the precipitancy of our paſſions, the devil, we re told, is a great inſtrument in promoting us to wickedneſs: e is repreſented in the parable, as [u] the enemy that ſows tares, he ſeeds of evil in our minds; but then his ſeed-time, we may bſerve, is while men ſleep, *i. e.* while they neglect the culti-ation of their ſouls, and are thoughtleſs: for let men once enter nto ſober thoughts, and take the ſhield of faith, which is no nore than the contemplation of God's threats and promiſes n hand, and then they have wherewithal to quench the ery darts of the devil. He that thinks ill, prevents the empter, and does the devil's buſineſs for him; he that thinks othing, tempts the tempter, and offers him the poſſeſſion of an mpty room; but he that thinks religiouſly, defeats the tempter, nd is proof, and ſecure againſt all his aſſaults.

THE

q Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. III. r Rom. ii. 5, 8, 9. s Young's ermons, Vol. II. t Matth. xiii. 25.

To recover us from it.

THE eagerneſs of paſſion, heightened by the inſtigations o Satan (as we find in the caſe of David) will ſometimes betray man, that, for the main, lives under this guard, into the com miſſion of very heinous offences; but then, his after-reflections and looking back ſeriouſly on what he has done, with the hel of divine grace, will as certainly recover him: for to this th royal penitent imputes his reſtoration; [u] "I thought on my ways I turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies," * I conſidered well wha I had done, and how I had behaved: I made a ſtrict inquir into my paſt life, and then I began to chide myſelf for my folly and to bewail my forgetfulneſs of God and heaven; and thus immediately abandoned my former ſins, and, as faſt as I could betook myſelf to an holy and religious life; I made haſte, an delayed not to keep thy commandments. And indeed, conſider ing that religion has pleaſantneſs in its ways, as well as glor in its end, whereas the paths of the wicked, beſet with briar and thorns as they are, lead certainly at laſt to the pit of deſtruc tion: it can hardly be preſumed that men of any competen underſtanding ſhould fly from the one and purſue the othe with the vehemence we find they do, would they but now an then ſtop a little in their career, breathe a while, and take tim to reflect on their conduct, and what will be the end thereof.

As therefore we deſire to ſtop up the ſources and fountain of ſin, to reſtrain our immoderate paſſions, and defeat the temp tations of our enemy; to prevent the acceſſion and allurement of vice, or to recover ourſelves to a ſtate of godlineſs, after w have unhappily fallen from it; we muſt learn the great act communing with ourſelves; and retiring from the hurry an buſineſs of the world, be every now and then putting ſuc queſtions as theſe to our ſouls. *Dic anima, quo tendis, &* *quod dirigis arcum?* "Tell me, ſoul, what art thou doing "at what rate liveſt thou? And whether tends the level "thy actions? Haſt thou the glory of God and thy ow "ſalvation in proſpect? Or elſe ſhooteſt thou at rovers, an "only beateſt the air? Life and death are ſet before the "which then of the two deſigneſt thou to chuſe? Wilt tho "purſue thy ſins any longer, or wilt thou betake thyſelf to "courſe of religion? On the ſide of religion there are trouble "indeed that muſt be undergone; every complexional ſin, "dear as a right hand, or a right eye, muſt be parted with "and ſome rules of uneaſy preſcription muſt be ſubmitted to "but then, in balance of theſe, there is the favour of God "the joy of the Holy Ghoſt, peace of conſcience, ſatisfaction "mind here, and an exceeding great reward in heaven, for "thy labour. On the ſide of vice there are pleaſures indee "that the world much admires and runs into; but then the "are attended with the anger of God, the ſenſe of guil "uneaſine

[u] Pſal. cxix. 59. * Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. III.

uneaſineſs of conſcience here, and terminate at laſt in a puniſhment not to be thought on without horror. Here is the option that is ſet before thee; and therefore, if thou haſt any reflection left, any deſire of happineſs, any averſion to damnation, think on thy ways, and turn thy feet unto God's teſtimonies."

2. THE other commendation of religious meditation is, its eat tendency to the promotion of good actions, ſuch as relate the practice of virtue, as well as the offices of devotion. irtue, we are ſure, wants not its beauty and attractions, × but en its amiableneſs is not matter of ſenſe: its chief benefits are ſtant and future, and the advantages whereby it endeavours engage us are ſuch as exiſt only in contemplation. If there- re we neglect to bring things diſtant home to us by thinking; we neglect to confirm our minds by the frequent proſpect of ernity, and to ſweeten the uneaſineſs of preſent things with e expectation of thoſe that are to ſucceed; it is impoſſible but at virtue ſhould loſe its power and attraction over us, and our uls run looſe to the entertainment of any pleaſures that more arly beſet us: it is impoſſible but that either deſign, or glo-, or unwillingneſs, or uneaſineſs, or regret ſhould creep in, d fully the very offices of our devotion. Offices of this kind, e know, are not acceptable to God for the outward work, but ly for the ſpirit and affection with which they are performed; r that warm love and ardent deſire, whereof the fire that was ver to go out upon the altar of burnt-ſacrifice in the Jewiſh mple was a very ſignificant emblem. But now, where ſhall e get this fire, or from whence ſhall we maintain it? There is rely no ſuch principle to be found in our natural temper, and is folly to expect it from mere infuſion: the freeſt irradiions of divine grace will never kindle it in us, without the e of proper means, and theſe means conſiſt in entertaining od thoughts and holy meditations. While I was muſing, ſays e Pſalmiſt, the fire kindled; for it is muſing, thinking, medition, that, like a burning-glaſs, will gather together, and amaſs e ſcattered beams of divine bounty which are always round out us, and darting them into our ſoul, will warm our affecons, and kindle the fire there; which beams, ſo long as they ly lie ſcattered about us, as they always do to the unthinking, e their influence, and can never adminiſter ſo much heat as ll make our altar burn, or our ſacrifice ſend forth a ſavour of ceptance.

To excite us to virtue and piety.

THE uſe and deſign of what has been ſaid on this ſubject, is recommend the duty of holy contemplation, and to engage us allow ſtated ſeaſons to meditate on ſacred and religious matrs; to enter into ſerious conſiderations concerning our future te, and the great and momentous events of eternity; often to

Motives to it.

× Young's Sermons, Vol. II.

to aſk ourſelves, whether we are in the right way to heaven or purſuing the paths that lead to perdition; often to demand of ourſelves, to what purpoſe we live in the world, what we were deſigned for, why we were made; and then ſee whether we have anſwered theſe ends in our lives, whether we have behaved according to the excellent rules of the goſpel, and the holy pattern, which the author and finiſher of our faith hath ſet us. This ſhould be ſome portion of our religious exerciſe every day: and to excite the performance of it, let it be remembered that unleſs we betake ourſelves to ſerious meditation now, that which at preſent would be a great bleſſing to us, will hereafter be our plague and torment; when conſcience ſhall awake out of the ſleep, in which we now detain it, and force upon us, whether we will or no, the conſideration of what we now induſtriouſly labour to forget, our conduct, and proceedings in this ſtate of trial: when the horrid ſcene of our ſad impieties ſhall ſtart up before us at once; [y] when, being ſcourged with the remembrance of paſt enjoyments, and terrified with our preſent paſſions, and groaning under the conviction of folly, we ſhall have our ſhame and anguiſh conſummated by deſpair. [z] Whoſo is wiſe will ponder theſe things, that, inſtead of knowing the terror, they may underſtand the loving-kindneſs of the Lord.

Of Humility.

Humility, what.

UNDER the government of our thoughts, may very properly be compriſed that humility of mind, which conſiſts in a modeſt and lowly opinion of ourſelves, our endowments and acquiſitions; or in not valuing ourſelves beyond what is due and juſt, upon the account of any good we are poſſeſſed of, whether it be internal or external; but, contrariwiſe, in being content, that any one ſhould think meanly and diſparagingly of us; ready to ſubmit our judgment to the judgment of others; careful to decline all fame and popularity; and ſtudious to conceal our own praiſes and excellencies, except when either the glory of God, or good of our brother are concerned in the publication.

A chriſtian duty.

UNDER this conſideration the grace of humility is oppoſed to pride and vain glory; which, however indulged in the heathen morals, and accounted a principle fitted for great undertakings in the revelation of the divine will, is utterly exploded, and repreſented as a deteſtable thing, both in the ſight of God and man. [a] Every one that is proud in heart, ſays Solomon, is an abomination to the Lord; and therefore it might well follow that though hand join in hand, he ſhall not be unpuniſhed: whereas, [b] to this man will I look, ſaith the Lord, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word.

y Young's Sermons, Vol I. z Pſal. cvii. 43. a Prov. xvi. 5. b Iſa. lxvi.

Well therefore might our bleſſed Saviour, who came to correct the wrong notions of heathen moraliſts, as well as fulfil and improve what was contained in the law and the prophets, lay the foundation of his religion in humility, and place, in the very front of his beatitudes, [c] Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit: well might he require of his followers, [d] to walk in lowlineſs and meekneſs; [e] to be clothed with humility; and [f] in lowlineſs of mind, to eſteem others better than themſelves; when though he was a perfect example of all moral and divine perfections, yet he commends himſelf chiefly to their imitation, upon the account of this excellent grace of humility: [g] learn of me; for I am meek, and lowly of heart, and ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls.

And indeed, [h] whether we conſider him in the myſtery of his incarnation, in the mean circumſtances of his birth, or in the obſcure method of his life; whether we conſider him as emptying himſelf of his eternal glories, and drawing, as it were, a cloud over his inherent brightneſs; as forbidding the devils, to publiſh his divinity; men, to declare his miracles; and his diſciples, to ſpeak of his transfiguration; or as waſhing his diſciples feet, converſing among ſinners, and, at laſt, chuſing to die between thieves: theſe, and many other inſtances of condeſcenſion, argue the moſt profound humility that can be imagined, and ſhew us withal the great care, our Lord took to exemplify it upon all occaſions. For though, of all the virtues and excellencies in the world, this of humility, one would think, was leaſt capable of being practiſed by the Son of God; yet we may here diſcern, what rare arts and myſteries God has found out to teach us this leſſon; and may thence be led to conclude how much it concerns us to know, 1. The reaſonableneſs and benefits, as well as, 2. The means of attaining a duty, that the divine wiſdom has been ſo particularly ſollicitous to teach.

I. [i] We uſually think it a very humbling conſideration, to remind a perſon of the meanneſs of his original: but what original can be ſo mean, as to be ſprung from nothing? It is enough to take down the ſpirit of the brighteſt intelligence to conſider, that nothing was his original, a ſtate more vile and diſhonourable, than the chaos itſelf. Now this is the condition of man: he had his riſe from nothing, and derives his pedigree, by his mother's ſide, from darkneſs and emptineſs; and though, by omnipotence, he is now become ſomething, yet ſtill he holds his being as precariouſly, as he firſt received it, and depends as much upon the will of his Creator for his exiſtence, as light does upon the ſun, or the image in the glaſs upon the preſence of the body: for, if God does but turn his face upon him, and ceaſe to behold him, he immediately, and, without any other influx, relapſes

The reaſonableneſs of it.

[c] Matth. v. 3. [d] Eph. iv. 1, 2. [e] 1 Pet. v. 5. [f] Phil. ii. 3. [g] Matth. xi. 29. [h] Norris's Diſcourſes, Vol. I. [i] Ibid. Vol. I.

lapſes into nothing. And ſhall that being then be proud, whic was once nothing, and has ſtill ſuch a natural propenſity towar annihilation, as to need only a bare negative, to make him n thing again? he certainly muſt forget his firſt extraction, th can give the leaſt admittance to pride; and together with tha muſt forget likewiſe the method of his preſervation, if he h not a moſt feeling ſenſe of his dependence and inſignificancy.

The folly and unreaſonableneſs of pride.

IT is a ſtrong ſarcaſm upon human pride, [k] that which w meet with in the Royal Preacher, where it is ſaid, [l] that pri was not made for man, nor furious anger for them that a born of a woman; for fancy pride where we will, it is no whe ſo improper, no where ſo incongruouſly placed, as in man: n becauſe his make is only of the common clay, neither tempere nor figured, nor tinged more elegantly, than that of other cre tures; as infirm, and putrid, and contemptible, as any of their for this is the leaſt part of his abaſement: it is a ſmaller di grace to his pedigree, that [m] corruption is his father, and t worm his mother and ſiſter, than that ſin is his offſpring. H make is but common, but his depravation wholly ſingular: a therefore let the ſea be proud, whoſe waves know their bound let the beaſts be proud, who live agreeable to the laws of th nature; the locuſts and caterpillars, who are God's armies; t wind and ſtorm, that fulfil his word; but let not man, the on rebel in nature, that ſtands diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of t creation, not ſo much by his reaſon, as by his guilt, the o heir of wrath, and ſhame, and miſery, let not him be prou pride was not made for him.

even on account of our greateſt accompliſhments.

"BUT though this proſpect of man be thus abaſing, yet "there not another light to conſider him in? Are not the "compliſhments of art, and aids of fortune, and much more t "endowments of wiſdom and virtue, valuable things, a "matters of our juſt eſteem? and may not the itch of o "imagination pleaſe and delight itſelf with theſe?" Th things we allow indeed are juſtly eſtimable, but then we aſſ farther, that no man ought to value himſelf for them; and t reaſon is, becauſe they are not his, but God's, intruſted only him, and for which he ſtands accountable; treaſures and tale they are committed to the earthern veſſel, but yet the veſſel itſ is no more than earthern ſtill. It is from a prejudice of vul miſtake then, that we call any advantages, ſupervenient to o nature, by the name of acquiſitions, as if the getting of th were imputable to the glory of our own counſels and end vours. St Paul plainly confutes this notion, when he dire this queſtion to the boaſter; [n] what haſt thou that thou h not received? It is God, that, to the attainment of all outw good things, gives both the means, the uſe, and the iſſue; th to the attainment of all inward accompliſhments, gives both capac

k Young's Sermons, Vol. I. l Eccluſ. x. 18. m Job xvii. 14. n 1 Cor. iv.

apacity, the application, and the ſucceſs; that, to the attainment of all moral perfections, gives both the power, the will, and the deed. Nothing is more frequently taught us in ſcripture, than that every good and every perfect gift cometh from above; that of ourſelves we can do nothing; that all our ſufficiency is from God: paſſages to this purpoſe are very numerous, as if the Holy Spirit were more than ordinary jealous of our incredulity in this point. But now, if it be aſked, why God chuſes to diſpenſe good things to us, rather than ſuffer us to acquire them; why all our perfections are gifts, and why we are ſo often, and ſo inſtantly put in mind that they are ſo? the reaſon is given in the foregoing place of the apoſtle, Why then boaſt thou glory, as if thou hadſt not received? to receive and to glory, to oblige, and yet to be proud, is pure abſurdity; as abſurd as it were for a man to think himſelf rich, merely becauſe he has borrowed a large ſum.

The benefits of humility.

THUS, whether we conſider the original, or corruption, the defects, or accompliſhments of our nature, the greateſt poſſible humility, and ſelf-annihilation become our reaſonable duty; but this is not all: our bleſſed Saviour, who laid the foundation of his religion in this ſpiritual grace, has told us expreſsly that [o] except we be converted, and become as little children, we ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven; but that he, who ſhall humble himſelf as a little child, the ſame ſhall be greateſt in the kingdom of heaven. By the kingdom of heaven, in this place, may be intended, both the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of glory. [p] The kingdom of grace is that ſweet and gentle government, which Chriſt the Son of God, and king of ſaints, does, by his Spirit, exerciſe over his followers, and ſuch as have given themſelves up to his conduct: the kingdom of glory is the future reward and recompence, which God intends to beſtow in the celeſtial manſions of bliſs, upon all thoſe, that have perſevered in their obedience to his commands: and ſo the words import, that humility of mind is highly conducive to make us both truly religious here, and eternally happy hereafter.

THE declaration, which God makes by the mouth of his holy prophet, is this,—[q] Thus ſaith the high and mighty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, and with him alſo, that is of a contrite ſpirit: and, if we would enquire for the reaſon, why the majeſty of heaven vouchſafes this honour to ſpirits of this complexion, we ſhall find, that humility indeed is the true foundation of union and commerce between God and the ſoul. [r] For it implies in its notion a due ſenſe of our want and inſufficiency; ſo it carries in it the whole reaſon of prayer, and application, and dependence upon God: as it implies in it a juſt

o Matth. xviii. 3. p Horneck's Sermons, Vol. I. q Iſa. lvii. 15. r Young's Sermons, Vol. I.

ſenſe of the divine bounty, from whence come all our ſupplies; ſo it carries in it the reaſon of praiſe and thankſgiving: as it implies a ſenſe of our own unworthineſs, it is in effect the ſame with the fear of God; a ſenſe of our diſtance, the ſame with the honour of God; and a ſenſe of our obligation, the ſame with our love of God: of ſo large an extent is the power and influence of this ſingle virtue, that, let a man but take care to encourage and cultivate it, it will naturally and eaſily lead him through all the offices of a religious life. Nor will it only lead him through theſe, but fit him likewiſe for heaven, and prepare him for the manſions of the bleſſed, where his poverty of ſpirit ſhall be recompenſed with a kingdom, and his humility with a crown; with a crown incorruptible, that fadeth not away, and whoſe glory and luſtre will be equal to the meaſure of his humility and ſelf-abaſement: [s] Humble yourſelves therefore, ſays the apoſtle, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; for, [t] whoſoever ſhall humble himſelf, as a little child, the ſame ſhall be greateſt in the kingdom of heaven. And therefore,

Means of attaining it.

II. To come to the means of attaining this heavenly grace, let us frequently call to remembrance the words of our gracious Lord and Saviour; bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit: bleſſed are they in themſelves, as being free from ambition and envy, from anger and revenge, and all ſuch boiſterous and troubleſome paſſions, as make the arrogant and ſelf-conceited mind uneaſy and unhappy in the midſt of all the good things that this world can afford: bleſſed are they in the ſight of God, who ſees their heart, and ſees there the lovely, the amiable, the charming virtue, he is moſt enamoured with; a virtue very reſemblant and agreeable to his divine nature, who dwelleth on high, and yet humbleth himſelf to behold the things in heaven and earth; and ſeeing his own image there, he cannot but [u] have reſpect unto the lowly: bleſſed in the eyes of men, who naturally reverence thoſe, that have mean opinions of themſelves; and therefore the apoſtle calls this virtue the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit, which not only in the ſight of God is of great price, but, through its own inward excellency, commands likewiſe the love and reſpect of all that behold it: bleſſed amidſt all the changes and chances of life; for while this grace reigns in his ſoul, however deſpiſed or abuſed by wicked men, God's Spirit hovers over him, angels viſit and attend him, his own conſcience juſtifies him, and the Lord Jeſus, that pattern of all humility, loves him: but much more bleſſed in the concluſion of it, when being tranſlated to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, he ſhall enter upon his glorious inheritance, and there, together [x] with an innumerable company of angels, with the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, which

To conſider its bleſſedneſs.

[s] 1 Pet. 5. 6. [t] Matth. xviii. 4. [u] Pſal. cxxxviii. 6. [x] Heb. xii. 23, 24.

re written in heaven, with God, the judge of all, and with Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, live in chaste and pure delights for ever.

The mischiefs of pride.

2. * To the same purpose, let us frequently consider the sad and mischievous effects of pride; that this vice first brought rebellion and strife into heaven, and cast down the apostate angels thence; that every proud man robs God of the honour due to his providence, erects new altars to strange deities, and, by the wildest of all idolatry, burns incense to himself; that pride makes men haughty and assuming in their carriage, peevish and perverse in their humour, troublesome and contentious in business, cavilling and captious in conversation; and is therefore far from gaining the love and esteem of others: but above all, that this is a vice destructive to our souls, as it covers our lurking faults, and draws a veil before our weaknesses and wants; as it prevents all repentance, and proves a certain bar to all improvements: for it shuts the door against admonition and reproof, forbids the advice of friends, and silences the checks of conscience. The most slender appearances of virtue it brings near and magnifies, the most deformed blemishes it throws off, and lessens to the eye, so that delusion only reigns, and truth is never received, till some awakening dispensation does at last, perhaps too late, discover the man to himself.

The humility of others.

3. To the same purpose, let us frequently meditate on the saints of God, those great exemplars of humility, that are recorded in the holy scriptures: how Abraham, who had the honour to be stiled God's friend, made no difficulty to humble himself with the name of [y] dust and ashes; how Jacob confesses himself less, than the least of God's mercies; how David acknowledges himself [z] a worm, and no man; how the great teacher of the Gentiles, who was taken up into the third heaven, and had revelations imparted to him, too glorious for human tongue to utter, descends so low as to term himself [a] the least of the apostles, not meet to be called an apostle, and what is more, not only less than the least of all saints, but even the chief of sinners. But above all, let us set before us, the meek and lowly Jesus, who, [b] though he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet humbled himself to the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And shall not we, for whose sake all this was done and suffered, give proof of an humble and submissive spirit? shall not the same mind be in us, which was in our gracious Saviour? yes, this is our duty, this our interest; and therefore we will set this pattern always before our eyes, and, in the constant course of our actions, bear it always in mind, that pride in him, who calls himself a christian, is

Of Christ himself

* Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. III. y Gen. xviii. 27. z Psal. xxii. 6. a 1 Cor. xv. 9. b Phil. ii. 6.

is perfectly abſurd, and more intolerable, than in any other ſort of men, becauſe the author of the chriſtian religion was ſo humble.

SECT. I.

Of the Government of our Paſſions, and Affections.

Paſſion, what,

BY the word [c] paſſion we underſtand either a ſtrong tendency of our ſouls towards ſomething that we look upon as very good, and conducive to our happineſs; or a ſtrong averſion and reſolution to fly from what we apprehend to be evil and pernicious to us: and this, on both ſides, attended with ſuch a ſenſible commotion of the blood and ſpirits, as keeps the mind much employed upon the preſent affair, to the excluſion of every thing elſe, and the prevention, many times, of all deliberate reaſoning concerning our conduct.

How it differs from affection.

IN this reſpect therefore it differs from affection, properly ſo called: for affection is the deſire or averſion we have to any object that we conceive to be good or evil, but without any bodily diſorder, and is therefore a ſimple modification of the mind: whereas, paſſion is always attended with a violent motion, in which we feel a kind of pain and uneaſineſs, whether the object that cauſes it be good or bad. For we find by experience, that in this imperfect ſtate of our nature, the moſt agreeable paſſion, even that of joy, has ſomething in it that overcomes and preſſes us too cloſe; that cauſes an uneaſineſs in the midſt of delight, and is ſometimes ſo violent as to ſink us under the weight of more happineſs than we can bear.

Paſſions not ſinful.

FOR this reaſon I preſume it is that the Stoics of old looked upon all paſſions and affections (for we take them in a promiſcuous ſenſe) as ſinful perturbations, deſtructive to the mind's tranquillity, and incompatible with the character of their wiſe man. Whereas it is plain that the God of nature has given us theſe impreſſions to our great benefit and advantage. They are like ſo many wings, whereby we are enabled to purſue and overtake what is our good, and conducive to our happineſs; and to fly from and eſcape what is hurtful, and would tend to our uneaſineſs; and are then only culpable when they are either miſplaced upon unworthy objects, or exceſſive in degree, when placed right.

Uſeful.

[d] THAT health of body, competence of fortune, the ſuccour of relations, friendſhips, and the like, are neceſſary conveniencies of life, cannot be denied; and therefore ſo much deſire of theſe things is conſiſtent with reaſon and religion, as is neceſſary to procure them; ſo much joy in the poſſeſſion of them, as is neceſſary to retain them by all honeſt methods; ſo much anger at thoſe that invade them, as is neceſſary to guard them; and ſo much

c Bragge on the Paſſions. d Clagget's Sermons, Vol. II.

uch ſorrow at the loſs of them, as will put us upon all fit deavours to recover them: for, without being moved and ected with theſe accommodations of life, it is plain enough t we ſhould take no manner of care of them. Reaſon indeed the proper arbitrator of what is good and evil, but when ſon has once given its determination, the paſſions are ready lend us their aſſiſtance. They fix all the natural ſpirits and oughts of the mind ſtrongly upon thoſe objects which they cite; and, with a ſudden call, awaken all the powers of nature act agreeably to their propenſions. [e] If the object be unmon, and has any thing in it rare and wonderful, the paſſion admiration fixes the mind to conſider it with ſtrong attention; he object appears to be good, the paſſion of love determines mind to purſue it with vigour; if it be repreſented as evil, paſſion of hatred excites us to uſe our outmoſt ſkill force to avoid it: amidſt the number of dangers that do round us, fear is a very neceſſary principle to keep us always n our guard: in a malicious and ill-natured world, anger is of at uſe to protect us from injury, and make oppreſſors fearful aſſault us: and, while we are ſo apt to expoſe ourſelves to ny grievances and diſtreſſes by our own folly, it was wiſely e in God to ordain ſorrow to attend all theſe diſtreſſes, and me, ſome of them, that thereby we might be awakened to ounce our follies from the ſhameful and painful ſenſe of m. And, in like manner, the more pleaſing affections of ure, ſuch as hope, and love, and joy, make life more fortable, and the troubles of it more tolerable, as well as a grateful reliſh and delight to all the difficult duties of ue and godlineſs, by their being mixed up in our conſtitu-

Were inherent in Chriſt,

Or ſuch ſingular uſe to the purpoſes of life are the paſſions affections, both pleaſant and painful, which God has imted in our nature; and therefore we need leſs wonder that find our bleſſed Saviour, in whom the perfection of it was ſpicuous, expreſſing upon all occaſions, the ſame love and re, the ſame anger and averſion, the ſame fear and hope, the ſame ſorrow and joy, which we find in ourſelves; with only difference, that what in us is ſo often exorbitant, in was always free from any irregular perturbation: for [f] it oved him, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, to be made in all things like o his brethren; [g] to be touched with the feeling of our mities, and, in all points, to be tempted like as we are, yet out ſin, that he might be a merciful, as well as a faithful -prieſt in things pertaining to God.

and ſhall abide with us in our glorified ſtate.

T is vain and abſurd advice therefore, which ſome ſages have n us, to endeavour to ſuppreſs our paſſions, by ſetting one epoſe and deſtroy another: for, beſides the perpetual tumults

e Watts on the paſſions. f Heb. ii. 17. g Ibid. iv. 15.

mults that this method would occaſion, our paſſions cannot
deſtroyed: they are inherent in our nature; they are indeli
and inſeparable from it; inſomuch [h], that even in the world
ſpirits, when our ſouls ſhall be in a ſtate of ſeparation (mu
more when our bodies ſhall be re-united to them at the reſu
rection) we ſhall have ſuch joyous or dolorous perceptions,
are ſuitable to the ſtate and condition we are in, whether hap
or miſerable; and theſe perceptions will be continually increaſi
to all eternity, as the cauſes and objects of them make new a
ſtronger impreſſions. In one reſpect indeed, theſe impreſſio
cannot ſtrictly be called paſſions, becauſe there can be no ext
ordinary commotion of the blood and ſpirits in a ſtate wher
even our bodies ſhall be ſpiritualized; yet there is no doubt b
that we ſhall be infinitely more affected with the objects of t
other world, whether good or evil, and thereby feel either ſu
confuſion and diſorder, or ſuch joy and delight in our ſouls,
will make us, beyond compariſon, more happy or more miſera
than it is poſſible for us to be in this. It is not our paſſi
then that we are to deſtroy; for that we cannot: they will la
the chief of them at leaſt, will laſt as long as we have our bei
and be inſtrumental to our future, as well as preſent, happy
unhappy condition; but it is the extravagancy of them that
are to reduce to good order, and bring under the governm
of reaſon and religion: and to this purpoſe we ſhall obſerve,
What it is to regulate our paſſions and affections; 2. The gr
benefits and advantages of doing this; and, 3. What rules
conſiderations may be conducive hereunto.

To regulate our paſſions is to place them upon proper objects.

I. THOUGH our paſſions and affections, eſpecially in the
and firſt workings of them, are very little ſubject to the comm
of our will, yet they depend, in ſome meaſure, upon the perc
tions of our minds. [i] We are ſo conſtituted by nature, tha
ſoon as we form the idea of certain objects or events,
deſire or averſion will immediately take the alarm: and, co
quently, our affections muſt very much depend upon the
nions we form concerning any thing that occurs to our mi
its qualities, tendencies, and effects. Thus love is occaſio
by the conception of good qualities, hatred, by the apprehen
of the contrary in any object; fear ariſes from the opinio
power and inclination to hurt us; pity, from the ſenſe of a
ther's undeſerved miſery, and ſhame, from the ſuppoſitio
another's contempt of us. A great part therefore of the
vernment of our paſſions will conſiſt in forming right
tions of what we call good and evil: for, if we are miſta
herein, and look upon that as a great good, which is, in
ality, a deſtructive evil, or that as a formidable evil whic
in truth, a very valuable good; it is plain that our paſſ

h Bragge on the Paſſions. i An Eſſay on the Nature and Conduct o
Paſſions and Affections.

ll be moſt wretchedly miſplaced, and as we ſhall love and ſire what we ſhould by all means avoid, ſo ſhall we hate and from what deſerves our love and purſuit; and, in conſequence this, we ſhall inevitably and ſpeedily bring ruin upon our-ves, by thoſe very methods which we thought would have ade us happy.

THE only way then to prevent all this miſchief is, to begin on a new bottom, to go upon new principles of action; to ctify our notions of good and evil, to engage our affections on their proper objects, and, even where they are laudably aced, there to reſtrain them from being exceſſive. To this rpoſe we muſt not rejoice at paſſages that ſhould be reſented th grief; nor delight in things which we are bound to deteſt; r be angry at things wherewith we ſhould be pleaſed; nor be o eager and hot in the purſuit of any worldly advantage, too ch tranſported when we have attained it, or too much con-rned when we are diſappointed of it. The kingdom of God d his righteouſneſs are what we muſt firſt of all ſeek; God muſt above all things love; public we muſt prefer before vate good; never be angry without a juſt cauſe; never reſent affliction beyond its weight: in matters of worldly joy, never greatly tranſported; and, on occaſions of worldly grief, never dejected beyond meaſure.

To reſtrain them from being exceſſive.

THUS to place our affections upon proper and deſerving ob-ts, and to make them commenſurate to the value of the ob-ts upon which they are engaged, is a great ſtep towards our gulation of them: [1] but then we muſt remember that all our ctions, the merry and chearful, as well as the painful and gry ones, are to be kept under this controul, that the mind y not be too much depreſſed with the latter, nor fooliſhly ted and tranſported with the former. For he only is the man that y be truly ſaid to rule his own ſpirit, who neither ſinks under iction, nor is puffed up with proſperity; who is not only ſecure m being fretted with grievous anger, and torn with revenge d envy; but is moreover not enſlaved with luſt, nor lifted up h pride, nor eſtranged from God by the idolatry of covetouſ-s, and the bewitching love of the ſenſual pleaſures: who, in rt, has all his paſſions under an habitual governance, being all times provided againſt deſiring inſatiably, and grieving im-derately, and being angry unreaſonably; at all times prepared ainſt all accidents, and armed againſt all temptations, by long ſideration, much reſolution, and great experience of himſelf. d ſo we proceed,

To govern them all.

II. To conſider ſome of the benefits and advantages of ruling paſſions in this manner. The wiſe man has a very remark-e proverb; [m] He that has no rule over his own ſpirit, is a city that is broken down, and without walls; a city, in this

The miſchiefs of not ruling our paſſions, &c.

1 Clagget's Sermons, Vol. II. m Prov. xxv. 28.

this condition, will be liable at all times to be entered by a army that beleaguers it; and what havock an enemy with th advantage may be enabled to make, is no great difficulty to im gine: and, [n] in like manner, as long as we live in this worl there will be provocations, temptations to luſt, and revenge, a envy; there will be croſſes and diſappointments; there will doubtful and ſuſpected ſayings; there will be fuel for o paſſions adminiſtred in great abundance, wherever we conver or have any buſineſs to tranſact: and therefore for a man have no rule over his ſpirit, is to be expoſed to the perpetu torment either of furious wrath, or gnawing envy, or bit ſorrow, or miſerable fear, or impatient deſire, &c. which, b ſides the uneaſineſs they give to the mind, do ſeldom fail to ſha the conſtitution of the body; to waſte the fleſh, and four t blood, and poiſon the ſpirits; and by that means impair t health, bring on diſeaſes, and ſhorten the compaſs of man's li But well were it for us if the conſequence of unruly paſſio were only felt in this life: the ſad conſideration of all is, th by the influence of theſe, we contract a vaſt heap of guilt, a are liable to the angry juſtice of God, whoſe authority we the while contemn, and whoſe juſt and holy precepts we brea for every exceſs of paſſion, and every wrong uſe of our aff tions are ſo many violations of the laws of God, which, witho a ſincere and timely repentance, will make all that are guilty them, endleſsly miſerable in the world to come.

The benefits of doing it as to peace of mind.

On the contrary, he, who has got the rule and dominion o his paſſions and affections, is like a city whoſe walls are comple and ſo regularly fortified, that they deſpiſe the rudeſt aſſaults the moſt deſperate and enraged enemy; or rather is like t ſteddineſs of a rock, which holds its place and is immoveab though never ſo violent and boiſterous waves beat furiouſly agai it. The blandiſhments of ſenſe are no allurements to him, beca he has learnt [q] that external pleaſures are ſhort and tranſito leave no agreeable reflection, and are no manner of advanta to us when they are paſt. The diſappointments of life m no uneaſy impreſſion upon him, becauſe he remembers that things of this nature are under the appointment of wiſe pro dence, which in other reſpects has been abundantly bountiful him, and [p] ſhall we receive good at the hand of God, and receive evil? The apprehenſion of pains ſit light upon him, cauſe he conſiders, that if they be violent, they will probably ſhort; if not, they are mixed with long intervals of eaſe, a that, when they are quite paſt, they leave no unpleaſant ref tion: nay, the very proſpect of death, of a violent and unna ral death for the ſake of righteouſneſs, loſes its terror up thoughts of the honour and approbation to be expected fr

G

n Clagget's Sermons, Vol. II. q An Eſſay on the Nature and Conduct of Paſſions. p Job ii. 10.

God and good men, as well as their own conſciences, if they continue firm; and, on the contrary, the remorſe, ſhame, and fear of future puniſhment if their hearts ſhould fail them when they come to the conflict, and have not courage enough to reſiſt unto blood.

And the offices of religion.

THUS is the man, who, by reaſon and reflection, has taught himſelf the art of ruling his paſſions, to all the temptations both of pleaſure or pain, that do every where ſurround him, inacceſſible. And, if we proceed to the more immediate offices of religion, we ſhall find that the thing which occaſions the practice of virtue and piety to be ſo uneaſy and irkſome to us, is not ſo much their contrariety to the temper of our minds, as the ill uſe we have made of our natural powers, and their pre-engagement to vice: becauſe, when we are once come to ourſelves, and have reduced our affections to their natural order, religion then will become agreeable to us, and the ſervice of God our perfect freedom. For [q] how plain and ſmooth will our way then lie before us, and what inconceivable delight ſhall we take in walking in it, when, by the grace of God and the aſſiſtance of his good ſpirit, we are come to that happy paſs, as to have no errors or extravagancies in our paſſions and affections, but find all their motions regular and right: when we ſhall admire and love, deſire and hope for nothing with great earneſtneſs, but to be like God and his divine Son, our bleſſed Redeemer, in purity and holineſs here, that ſo we may become capable of the bliſsful enjoyment of them hereafter: and in the mean time, rejoice in nothing ſo much as in the teſtimony of a good conſcience; hate nothing ſo much as ſin, which indeed is the greateſt and moſt deſtructive evil; dread nothing ſo much as to be ſurpriſed and overcome by it in any inſtance; and find ourſelves never ſo deeply affected with ſorrow and compunction of ſpirit, as when we have been ſo unhappy as to be betrayed into it? When our paſſions, I ſay, are brought into this courſe and channel, they will flow ſilently and ſmoothly on, and ſerve, like oars and ſails, to bring us to the enjoyment of our ſupreme good; which we ſhall then purſue with vigour, but without perturbation; and with a ſwift and even motion, without the extravagant excurſions and violent agitations and dangers that attend hurricanes and ſtorms. And therefore,

Rules to this purpoſe.

III. To lay down ſome rules for the acquiſition of this good government of our paſſions, one of our principal cares muſt be, to reſiſt them in the beginning before they become inordinate; to check and rebuke all malicious and revengeful, all unclean and laſcivious, all covetous and repining thoughts at their firſt ſtarting up in our minds; becauſe there is no dallying with corrupt and impure imaginations, nor any knowing how great a fire a ſmall ſpark of this nature, when let alone, may be able to kindle.

[q] Bragge on the Paſſions.

To the ſame purpoſe, it may be adviſeable [r] to inure ourſelves to croſs our paſſions when there is no danger, and to reſtrain our appetites ſometimes from ordinary and lawful enjoyments, that we may do it with more eaſe, when dangerous temptations ſhall aſſault us: and withal, it will be neceſſary to fly all occaſions that may incenſe the paſſion, whereunto we are naturally inclined: for can a man take fire in his boſom, and his clothes not be burnt? Or, if he willingly goes into the company of infected perſons, can he blame any but himſelf if he falls into their diſeaſes? Our more particular vigilance muſt therefore be employed againſt that ſin which does ſo eaſily beſet us; againſt that paſſion which we have leaſt in our power, becauſe it ariſes moſt from our complexion; always remembring to make it our ardent ſupplication to God, that he, who giveth wiſdom liberally, and upbraideth not, would teach us the wiſdom of governing our paſſions, and, by the ſtrength and aſſiſtance of his bleſſed Spirit, give us the victory over them; that, paſſing our lives in all peace and quietneſs, we may, in the concluſion of them, be found * meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light, and to be conducted into that happy place where the war between the law in our minds, and the law in our members, between the dictates of our reaſon, and the propenſities of our paſſions will expire in an everlaſting peace.

Of Meekneſs.

Meekneſs, what.

OF all the paſſions that God has implanted in our nature, that which occaſions the greateſt perturbation, and is therefore more peculiarly called paſſion, is anger. Anger however, as [s] we had occaſion to obſerve before, is not always culpable: it is only ſo indeed when it either ariſes from an unwarrantable cauſe, or proceeds to an exceſſive degree; and this the evangelical grace of meekneſs is deſigned to reſtrain: for meekneſs is that temper or diſpoſition of mind whereby a man ſo moderates and commands the paſſion of anger, as not to be carried to any ſuch exceſs of it, as may either diſcompoſe himſelf, or injure his neighbour. After therefore we have, 1. Shewn the nature and unreaſonableneſs of this duty; we ſhall, 2. Suggeſt ſome conſiderations that may be of uſe to enforce the practice of it.

A chriſtian virtue.

I. [t] AMONG all our natural paſſions there is none wherein both our own and our neighbour's happineſs is ſo often, and ſo much concerned, as in that of anger: ſo often, becauſe it is a thing of daily incurſion; and ſo much, becauſe it endangers the ſtrength and ſtability both of private and public peace, and, conſequently, ſuch a due moderation of this paſſion as may ſecure both, is a very conſiderable inſtance of that charity which the apoſtle

r Mede's Works, Book I. * Col. i. 12. s See Vol. II. page 153. t Norris Diſcourſes, Vol. I.

apoſtle tells us is the fulfilling of the law. The Jewiſh law indeed, which admitted of a retaliation of injuries, made little or no proviſion for this virtue, which was equally excluded from the ſyſtem of heathen morals; but our bleſſed Saviour, who came to advance human nature to its utmoſt perfection, makes humility and meekneſs the two great fundamentals of his religion. Come unto me, ſays he, and learn of me; but what are we to learn? Not to make worlds, not to cure the ſick, not to reſtore ſight to the blind, or life to the dead; but learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart. But why did our Lord propoſe theſe virtues only to our imitation? Was it becauſe he had no other, or becauſe he excelled in theſe above the reſt? In him dwelt the fulneſs of the Godhead, which is not conſiſtent with the abſence of any one virtue; and though, as to the outward exerciſe, he might be more remarkable for one than another, according as opportunities or circumſtances might require; yet, as to the inward habits and diſpoſitions themſelves, he was equally perfect in them all; and therefore the reaſon why he recommends only theſe two to his followers, muſt be partly becauſe he was the only maſter that could teach them, and partly becauſe there was ſome ſpecial excellency in the virtues themſelves, above any other of the chriſtian law; and therefore we find him compriſing the whole under theſe two articles, [u] Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.

The example of Chriſt herein.

AND indeed, if we attend a little to the ſtory and proceſs of his life, we ſhall ſoon ſee that never was any man's meekneſs ſo tried as was his. For as the real excellence and dignity of his perſon heightened every affront and rude treatment of him to an incomparable degree; ſo did the outward lowneſs and meanneſs of his condition expoſe him to an infinite number of them, and yet, notwithſtanding the number and heinouſneſs of his provocations, we do not find that he was ever in the leaſt diſcompoſed or put into a paſſion by them. Moſes indeed was a man ſo very eminent for this virtue, that the ſcripture gives us this character of him, * that he was very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth; and yet we find that, with all his meekneſs, he could not bear with the perverſeneſs of that untractable people the Jews, who, as the Pſalmiſt's obſervation is, [x] ſo provoked his ſpirit, that he ſpake unadviſedly with his lips. Now our bleſſed Lord had to deal with the ſame generation of men, but under infinitely greater prejudices and diſaffections: from them he ſuffered more indignities than ever could be offered to Moſes; and yet none of their ill uſage raiſed any angry reſentment in him, though they did it in thoſe that paſſed by and beheld his abuſes. Thus the unkindneſs of the fickle Samaritans could not ſo much as ſtrike a ſpark into his divine

[u] Matth. xi. 29. * Numb. xii. 3. [x] Pſal. cvi. 33.

vine breaſt, when, at the ſame time, it made his two zealou diſciples, James and John, kindle to that degree as to deſir y fire from heaven to conſume them: and in like manner, th rough ſeizure of his ſacred perſon by the ſoldiers could not ex tort from him ſo much as an angry look, when yet the ver ſight of it z made his warm diſciple draw his ſword. If I hav ſpoken evil, bear witneſs of the evil; but if well, why ſmite thou me? is all the anſwer that he returned to the inſultin officer who ſtruck him. What could be ſaid more mild or di paſſionate? What could argue a more ſedate and well-governe ſpirit? His greateſt apoſtle, when under a leſs provocation, ha not this command over himſelf; for, being not actually ſmitte but only ordered by the high-prieſt to be ſo treated, he return him this ſharp and ſevere anſwer, God ſhall ſmite thee, tho whited wall; for ſitteſt thou to judge me after the law, an commandeſt me to be ſmitten contrary to the law? There not indeed any thing in this anſwer but what may be juſtifie by the oddneſs of the provocation; but yet we cannot but pe ceive a great difference between the behaviour of the maſte and the diſciple, though this is far from being the higheſt i ſtance of his meekneſs. To have a due eſtimate of that, we mu look upon him under the ſhame, and diſhonour, and torme of the croſs, encountering at once with the pains and agonies death, the contradictions of ſinners, and the vengeance of A mighty God, and all this without any the leaſt ſhew of imp tience or diſcompoſure; and then we ſhall find the prediction the prophet verified to the full; a He was oppreſſed, and he w afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; He was brought as lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her ſhearers dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth.

The excellency of this virtue.

AND it was fit indeed that our bleſſed Saviour, both by precept and example, ſhould recommend a virtue to us, whi proceeds from a greatneſs and generoſity of mind, and is itſelf noble atchievement; for b he that is ſlow to anger, is bett than he that is mighty, and he that ruleth his ſpirit, than that taketh a city: a virtue c which is an enemy to pride a arrogance, to contention and turbulency, to moroſity and pe viſhneſs, to reviling and cenſuring, and whatever is the produ of a bitter and choleric ſpirit: a virtue which is fitted to all t purpoſes of our lives, and requiſite in all degrees and conditio of men; in ſuperiors, that they may rule with affection; inferiors, that they may behave with ſubmiſſion; in paren that they provoke not their children to wrath; and in childre that they obey their parents in all things; in the rich, that th be not puffed up with pride; in the poor, that they do n ſwell with envy; in thoſe of mature age, that they be not m

y Luke ix. 54. z Matth. xxvi. 51. a Iſa. liii. 7. b Prov. xvi. 32.

roſe and froward; in thoſe that are young, that they ſhew reverence to their elders; and, in ſhort, in all, that they bring honour to their religion and holy profeſſion. This is a virtue, which, in the ſight of God, is an ornament of great price; which gains us the good-will and favour of men; which conquers the malice and prejudice of enemies; which allays all ſtorms and tempeſts in our breaſts; which gives us the quiet enjoyment of ourſelves, and a true reliſh of what we poſſeſs; and in this ſenſe we may properly enough underſtand the words of our Saviour, [d] Bleſſed are the meek, for they ſhall inherit the earth.

THE meek indeed, we may generally obſerve, are far from having the largeſt ſhare of this world's plenty: it is to the bold and daring, the furious and boiſterous, that things of this nature are uſually allotted: theſe are they, that proſper in the world, and have riches in poſſeſſion; nor can it be imagined that our bleſſed Lord, who himſelf made choice of a ſtate of poverty, who recommends ſo earneſtly a contempt of the world, warns us of the danger of riches, and diſſuades us from laying up treaſures on earth, ſhould ever pronounce a meek man bleſſed, merely for having abundance of wealth. The ſenſe of the words therefore muſt relate to the manner of poſſeſſing, rather than the greatneſs of the poſſeſſions, and ſo muſt import,—that the meek man ſhall enjoy what he has, be it little, or be it much, with comfort and ſatisfaction of mind, being prepared to acquieſce in every diſpenſation of providence, and to confine his wants and deſires to his preſent circumſtances; whereas thoſe of a contrary diſpoſition, though they may poſſeſs a great deal, may yet be truly ſaid to enjoy little or nothing: and this ſeems to be the ſenſe of the Pſalmiſt, when, in words directly parallel to theſe of our Lord, he tells us, that [e] the meek ſpirited ſhall poſſeſs the earth, and be refreſhed in the multitude of peace, *i. e.* they have pleaſure and content in whatever they have; for as he immediately ſubjoins a ſmall thing, that the righteous has, is better than great riches of the ungodly: which leads us to obſerve,

II. WHAT may be of uſe to engage the practice of this duty. And to this purpoſe it will be requiſite for us frequently to conſider where we are, whom we converſe with, and what is our main concern. We live in a troubleſome and tempeſtuous world; we converſe with men of corrupt natures and evil diſpoſitions; our main buſineſs and concern lies in a diſtant and heavenly country; and therefore we muſt not affect eaſe and tranquillity here, we muſt not expect to gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thiſtles. It is impoſſible but that offences ſhould come; but then, when they come, we have wherewith to rebate their ſting, by conſidering that this is the common fate of human life; that every thing is ſent upon us by the providence of

Means of attaining it.

d Matth. v. 5. e Pſal. xxxvii. 11, 16.

of God: and that, by his wise appointment it is, that through many trials and tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of heaven.

To the same purpose it may be proper frequently to reflect on the horrid deformity and mischievous consequences of immoderate anger; [f] what agonies of mind, what disorder of spirits, what desperate absurdities of behaviour, what fury and phrenzy it hurries men into, what rash oaths, what horrible imprecations, what blasphemous, nay, what senseless profanation of God's most holy name; what virulence of expression, what base divulging of secrets, what injuries and violations of intimate confidences, which are sure to be contemned ever after, but perhaps can never be repaired again. These things are so notorious, and so incident to the passion of anger, that I verily believe no man ever saw another violently transported with it, who did not either pity or despise him; and that none was ever so transported himself, who did not commit something whereof he did not find sufficient cause, upon second reflection, both to repent and be ashamed of. But, on the other hand, [g] how calm is the mind, how serene the countenance, how mild the language, how engaging the behaviour, how sweet the sleep, how grateful the repast, how prosperous the spiritual estate, how happy and delightful the whole life of him that has brought his angry passions under subjection; that is at peace with himself, and at peace with the whole world; that is neither devising mischief against others, nor suspecting any to be contrived against himself! So true is the observation of the wise man, that [h] he who is slow to anger, is of great understanding, but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.

But above all, the folly or wisdom of these different tempers will then appear, when this short scene of things shall be shifted; when we shall be removed into an immortal world of spirits, and have each of us our souls sorted into their proper place and company; when the proud and arrogant, the peevish and quarrelsome shall be consigned to the sad abode of spirits of their own complexion, there to wrangle out a long eternity in perpetual feuds and contentions, in perpetual vexing and tormenting one another; while the meek and gentle, the quiet and peaceable shall be received into the society of heavenly lovers, into the regions of peace and tranquillity, and into the bosom of the blessed Jesus, who, in our own nature, set us the example of this most excellent virtue, that we might follow his steps.

To this purpose therefore let it finally be considered, that how mean and despicable a figure soever the man of a meek and pacific temper may seem to make in this world of tumult and confusion; yet [i] the time will come, when persons that have raise

[f] Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. III. [g] Barrow's Works, Vol.
[h] Prov. xiv. 29. [i] Blackhall's Sermons, Vol. I.

raiſed the greateſt noiſe and buſtle, thoſe ſons of thunder and reſtleſs intrigue, that have laid the world waſte, and turned it opſide down to gratify their boundleſs ambition and ungovern-d appetites, ſhall take up the ſentiment of the wiſe ſon of Sy-rach, and ſay, This is he whom we had ſometimes in deriſion, nd for a proverb of reproach, *i. e.* looked upon him as an eaſy nd good-natured fool: we fools, then it ſhall be, accounted his ife madneſs, and his end to be without honour; but how is he ow numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among he ſaints!

Of Contentment.

UNDER the regulation of our paſſions and affections, we may not improperly place the art of contentment, [k] which onſiſts in ſuch an acquieſcence and good pleaſure in that con-ition of life wherein the providence of God has placed us, as ill not ſuffer the deſire of change to trouble our ſpirit, and diſ-ompoſe our duty; as will engage us to entertain all occurren-es of life, and even the ſevereſt diſpenſations of heaven, not nly with patience and ſubmiſſion, which was a point inſiſted n [l] before, not only with calmneſs and compoſedneſs, which ay proceed ſometimes from a ſtupidity of temper, but with a eal complacency and chearfulneſs of mind; [m] counting it all oy, as the apoſtle terms it, when we fall into divers tempta-ions; becauſe we know the trying of our faith worketh pa-ience, and if patience have her perfect work, ſhe will make us erfect and intire, wanting nothing. Contentment, what.

To diſcover the reaſonableneſs then of being habitually well-leaſed with our ſtate and condition, of what kind ſoever it be, et us,

I. Look up to God, in whom we live, move, and have our eing; and in him conſider the ample proviſion he has made or our neceſſities. Our neceſſities indeed, if we conſult nature, re not many; [n] the chief things for life, as the ſon of Syrach omputes them, are water, and bread, and clothing, and an ouſe to cover ſhame; and of theſe the generality of mankind re not deſtitute: [o] for though they may not have them poured to their laps by birth-right and inheritance, yet they have em by their daily induſtry and acquiſition, which perhaps is good a tenure. The great apoſtle St Paul, though he might ave exacted a maintenance of the church in behalf of his miniſtry, et thought himſelf rich enough while he was able to work for is living. He rejoices indeed in the love of the Philippians, ho had been ſo kind as to make a contribution for him; but takes care to inform them that he did not rejoice ſo much becauſe The reaſonable-neſs of it. From the conſidera-tion of God's bounty.

k Patrick on Contentment. l Vid. page 313. m James i. 2. n Ecclus. xix. 21. o Patrick, ibid.

becauſe they had made him rich, as becauſe they had done their duty, and were rich in good works: [p] not that I ſpeak in re ſpect of want, ſays he, for I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abaſed and I know how to abound; every where, and in all things I am inſtructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to ſuffer need: nevertheleſs, ye have well done, in that ye did communicate with my affliction.

THE moſt diſconſolate ſtate is that of ſickneſs, or old-age, in conjunction with poverty; [q] but even here God has made a competent proviſion, by aſſigning all ſuch, as have this double load upon them, to the care and relief of the rich. Theſe he has made his proxies and repreſentatives upon ſuch occaſions; and though many of them ſcandalouſly falſify their truſt in this regard, yet, in all parts, there are ſome ſcattered here and there like cities of refuge in the land, whereunto thoſe, that are in want and diſtreſs, may ſeaſonably fly for ſuccour; inſomuch that what with the legal proviſions that are made in this caſe and what with the voluntary contributions of the charitable few, very few, I hope, want the things that are abſolutely ne ceſſary; which [r] the apoſtle compriſes in the ſmall compaſs of food and raiment, and propoſes them as materials ſufficient for content: for as it is an eaſier thing to ſatisfy the cravings of a hungry, than to cure the ſqueamiſhneſs of a ſurfeited ſtomach; ſo certainly the diſcontents of the poor are much eaſier allay ed, than thoſe of the rich. The indigence of the one has con tracted his deſires, and taught him to look no farther, than a little beyond bare neceſſaries; ſo that a moderate alms ſatisfies and a liberal one tranſports him: but he, who, by perpetual re pletion, has his deſires ſtretched and extended, is capable of no ſuch ſatisfaction. In ſhort, [s] he, who can put an end to his wiſhes (as the contented man always does) with the ſame labour puts an end to his uneaſineſs too; for uneaſineſs is the natural motive of deſire, and, reciprocally, he, whoſe deſires are ſatisfi ed, has all the happineſs that is attainable in this life. It is to be obſerved farther of the bleſſings of God, that the greater and more ſubſtantial they are, the more they are in number and of common uſe. The four elements of fire, water, air, and earth, are appointed to ſupply every man's occaſions and need. The whole hoſt of heaven, the ſun, moon, and ſtars, [t] are by God divided to all nations. The ſun ſhines as bright on the poor cottage, as on the moſt magnificent palace; and the ſtars have their benign aſpects, as well for him that [u] is behind the mill, as for him that ſitteth on the throne. All our ſenſes, the members of our bodies, all the powers and faculties of our ſouls, which, by the bleſſing of God, moſt o us enjoy perfect

p Phil. iv. 11. &c. q The Art of Contentment, by the Author of the Whole Duty of Man. r 1 Tim. vi. 8. s Rogers's Sermons Vol. III. t Deut. iv. u Exod. xi. 5.

and intire, are not only more in number, but of far greater value, that what we fancy we want, in order to our happineſs. * For, is not the life more than meat, ſays our Saviour, and the body than raiment? take no heed therefore for your life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye ſhall put on: x "Hath not God beſtowed upon you, that which is infinitely better than all thoſe things, about which you are wont to be ſo ſollicitous? and will he deny you the leſs, who has granted you the greater boon? doth not your heavenly Father know that ye have need of theſe things? and would he have made you with theſe needs of meat, drink, and raiment, had he not likewiſe taken care to ſupply them? what is houſe or clothing, if you look upon the curious fabric of your body which he hath reared? Or what is food, in compariſon of that noble life which you feel yourſelves inſpired with? without all controverſy, he will never ſuffer you to want ſuch ſmall things, who already has been ſo liberal in beſtowing greater benefits; eſpecially, ſince theſe greater benefits cannot be ſupported without the other. Conſider, as he adds, the fowls of the air: becauſe God has given them a body, therefore he gives them food, though they neither ſow, nor reap, nor gather into barns, to lay up proviſion for themſelves: are ye not much better than they? deſpair not then of his providence: he will be ſo much the more careful of you, as you are better than birds, and other ſuch like creatures, who, without any thought of their own, find every thing that is needful for them ready at hand."

God's Providence.

LET us look up to God again as the ruler, as well as benefactor, the great diſpoſer, as well as provider for mankind, and under this view, we ſhall perceive equal reaſon to be eaſy and contented, in that our affairs are lodged in the hand of his providence, which is much better and ſafer, than to have the management of them in our own power. y We are apt to imagine, that, if God would give us leave to carve out our own condition, we could make a moſt admirable proviſion for ourſelves; that if we could gain ſuch a point, and compaſs ſuch a deſign, we ſhould be made for ever; when alas! we never conſider how many inconveniencies would follow upon ſuch a ſuppoſition. The fair appearances of things invite us, and we are hurried on by a blind and eager deſire; but whether we are able to manage our choice, we are wholly ignorant. We never conſider what dangers and difficulties we ſhall meet with, what ſnares and temptations lie in our way; how our humours and paſſions are apt to vary with enlarged circumſtances, and what a great deal of circumſpection and ſteadineſs is neceſſary to ſecure our virtue. So that, next to the providence of

* Matth. vi. 25, &c. x Patrick on Contentment. y Collier's Sermons.

God, we often owe our ſafety to our impotence, and are only happy, becauſe we have it not in our power, by changing our fortune, to make ourſelves miſerable. One man fancies, that if he could but raiſe his fortune to ſuch a pitch, no one could be happier than himſelf: but he does not ſeem to be aware that many are maſters of much more than he deſires, and yet are viſibly uneaſy and diſcontented. He never conſiders, that the care of keeping, and the deſire of increaſing riches, does often ſo buſy and perplex mens minds, that they have no leiſure to enjoy them. He never thinks how many falſe and fantaſtical appetites they are apt to excite in us, and to create more wants than they are able to ſatisfy; otherwiſe he would perceive, that the happineſs of [z] a man's life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth. Another imagines, that there is a ſtrange felicity lodged in authority, and is mightily troubled to ſee himſelf ſhut out. "If he was once in power, "if he had a public ſtage to act upon, he would make an illuſ- "trious figure, and rectify many of thoſe diſorders which diſ- "turb ſociety: but he is ſo unfortunate as to be confined to a "private ſtation; he is buried in an obſcure retreat; he has "not room enough to diſplay his parts and ſufficiency; no "opportunities to ſhew the greatneſs and generoſity of his "mind." But were he ſenſible how dangerous a thing it is to be great, how ſteep and ſlippery an elevated ſtation is, and how much it lies expoſed to malice and envy; he would rather dread the precipice, than be eager to climb the aſcent: [a] he would plainly perceive that a man had need have his head very ſteady and well-poiſed, otherwiſe his height will make him turn giddy; and when this happens, a falſe ſtep, or a malicious puſh is enough to ſet him going, and then it is an eaſy thing to gueſs what a bruiſe he is like to get by the fall, and how contemptible he will look at the bottom.

SINCE then the moſt tempting conditions that men can propoſe to themſelves are ſo likely to make them unfortunate, is it not more prudent, as well as more pious, to reſign up our choice to the providence of God; to acquieſce in his diſpoſals, and to think thoſe circumſtances moſt proper which he has placed us in? for ſhould God yield to the importunity of our complaints, his favours might undo us, and as [b] the heathen poet obſerves, the ſucceſs and grant of our requeſts would prove our ruin. It is a very diſcreet form of prayer therefore, which [c] one of the greateſt of the heathen ſages teaches us; "That "God would give us ſuch things as were convenient for us, "though we did not aſk them; and deny us ſuch, as were not "though we did." God has a perfect knowledge of the capacities and inclinations of his creatures, and what effects every condition will have upon them; he foreſees what miſeries will

z Luke xii. 15. a Collier's Serm. b Juvenal, Sat. 10. c Socrates in plat. Alc.

ſhall be plunged into, if we are truſted to chuſe for ourſelves, what rocks we ſhould run upon, if he allowed us to ſteer to our own point; and therefore, in pure mercy, reſtrains us from ſo dangerous a freedom, denies us our fatal wiſhes, and makes us happy againſt our wills. Since then we are much more ſecure in God's hands, than we are in our own, how unreaſonable, how ungrateful muſt it be, to murmur at his allotment, and be diſſatisfied with the reſults of his wiſdom, merely by adhering to our own vain imaginations? nay, how vain and ridiculous is it to oppoſe our wiſhes to the divine counſels, and to fret and fume at that which we can by no means help; [e] for behold, God taketh away, ſays holy Job, and who can hinder him? who will ſay unto him, what doſt thou? if he will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do ſtoop under him: how much leſs ſhall I anſwer him, and chuſe out my words to reaſon with him? whom though I were righteous, I would not anſwer, but would make my ſupplication to my judge. And this will lead us

II. To caſt our eyes upon ourſelves, and to reflect a little upon our own particular condition, in order to eſtabliſh our content. And to this purpoſe, let us, in the firſt place, aſk ourſelves, what are we? [f] creatures, that are naturally indigent and impotent, that have no juſt claim to any thing, nor any poſſeſſion maintainable by our power: all we have, or can have, comes from pure courteſy and bounty; and therefore, how little ſoever is allotted us, we have no wrong done us, or any juſt cauſe to complain. Nay, if we rightly ſurvey ourſelves, and take into our account the depravities of our nature, as well as the enormities of our lives, we ſhall think any thing good enough for us; and with all humility confeſs, that [g] it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not conſumed, becauſe his compaſſions fail not. For ſhall we, who are conſcious to ourſelves of ſo many great ſins againſt our God, who, by wilful tranſgreſſions, and ſlothful neglects, have ſo much abuſed and affronted him; ſhall we, I ſay, affect to live in eaſe, and ſwim in plenty, and flouriſh in a brave and ſplendid condition, when it is a favour granted us that we are permitted to ſubſiſt? it is not ſurely for ſuch perſons to be diſſatisfied with any thing in this life, but to bleſs God's exceeding mercy, that they are ſtill on this ſide of the bottomleſs pit. [h] I will bear the indignation of the Lord (ſays the church, by the mouth of the prophet) becauſe I have ſinned againſt him; and much more then ſhould we acknowledge the righteouſneſs of God in all his diſpenſations, and account our condition, though much more deplorable than it is, ten thouſand times better [i] than our inquities deſerve.

From the conſideration of ourſelves.

FOR indeed, what condition can we figure to ourſelves, ſo wretched and deplorable, as not to have ſome comforts to alleviate

[e] Job ix. 12, 13. [f] Barrow's Sermons, Vol. III. [g] Lam. iii. 22. [h] Mic. vii. 9. [i] Ezra ix. 13.

viate its griefs, ſome advantages to place in the contrary ſcale againſt its inconveniencies. Poverty indeed may, at firſt ſight, ſeem a very ſore evil; but, if we conſider it a little more attentively, what is it, [k] but the abſence of a few ſuperfluous things, which if we did not affect, we ſhould not want; but, at the ſame time, the abſence likewiſe of many cares and diſtractions, many dangers, many temptations, many diſtempers both of body and ſoul, to which a plentiful and large fortune is known to be expoſed? It is a ſtate, which many have born with great chearfulneſs, which wiſe men have voluntarily embraced, which the beſt men have been known to endure, which God has expreſſed his regard to, and which the Son of God has dignified by his choice and ſanctified by his participation; and can ſuch a ſtate countenance our murmurings and complaints? we have but a ſcanty allowance perhaps of the neceſſaries of life, but then we eat the homely morſel, we have, with a good appetite, and ſleep, when we are weary, without diſturbance; for [l] the ſleep of a labouring man is ſweet, eat he little, or eat he much. Together with our poverty we have health; and [m] health, and a good eſtate of body, ſays the wiſe Hebrew, is above all gold; we have a quiet mind, which all the riches in the world are not to be compared with; a free uſe of our time, which the greateſt miniſter of ſtate would be glad to taſte of; and an unſullied reputation, which is more than can be obtained by the moſt ſplendid fortune. Add to this, that our conſcience is eaſy, our appetite within rule, and our faculties in their vigour; that we have none of the burdens, the diſeaſes, the vices of ſloth and luxury, and, if our condition be really calamitous, ſeldom fail of the compaſſion of men, which is certainly much better than that envy, ill-will, and obloquy, which uſually attend on wealth and proſperity.

These are ſome of the things that God has made the bleſſings of a low eſtate, and we do manifeſt injuſtice to his mercy and goodneſs, when we overlook the comfortable part, and fix our attention upon nothing, but the inconveniencies of it. For ſuppoſe theſe inconveniencies never ſo great, and ourſelves ſunk into the very abyſs of calamities; yet, as there is no neceſſary connection between the preſent and the future, who can [n] tell what a day may bring forth? the ſame God, [o] who maketh ſore, bindeth up, who [p] weakeneth the ſtrength of the mighty, [q] raiſeth the poor out of the duſt, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, that he may ſet him with the princes of therefore ſince nothing happens without his determination, ſince he knows our calamity, and, as it were, ſympathizes with us; above all, ſince we have his promiſe that he will provide for us in want, comfort us in trouble, and ſuccour us in diſtreſs

k Barrow's Sermons, Vol. III. l Eccleſ. v. 12. m Ecclus. xxx. 15. n Prov. xxvii. 1. o Job. v. 18. p Chap. xii. 21. q Pſal. cxiii. 7, 8.

e have all imaginable reaſon to hope for an amendment of our ondition, when it is bad, rather than to fear a continuance of : for this is the wiſe man's remark upon the matter, [r] the pa- ent man ſhall bear for a time, and afterwards joy ſhall ſpring p to him.

But ſuppoſe, that the providence of God, for ſundry reaſons, inks proper to continue our calamities upon us, as long as we ve; yet there is one comfortable reflection ſtill behind, viz. at life itſelf cannot be long; it is but a vapour, that appear- h for a little time, and then vaniſheth away; and, together ith it, all our ſorrows and complaints for ever: for death which may be very near, which cannot be far off) is a ſure ha- en from all the tempeſts of life, a ſafe refuge from all the erſecutions of the world, and an infallible cure for all the diſ- aſes of our preſent condition. It will enlarge us from all re- raints; it will eaſe us of all our toils; veil all our diſgraces, ifle all our cares, wipe all tears from our eyes, and baniſh all rrow from our hearts. So that, it is but holding out a little hile longer, and then all our moleſtation will, of its own ac- ord, expire. In the mean time, to allay the uneaſineſs of our inds, we ſhould do well to reflect on the many ineſtimable eſſings we have in our hands, which are above the power of liction to extort from us: that we have ſtill the uſe of our aſon, which exceeds all the treaſures of the world; ſtill the mfort of a good conſcience; ſtill acceſs to the throne of grace; ill the ſenſe of the divine favour here, and the expectation of e divine preſence hereafter; and how can he be ſuppoſed to ant any thing, who, beſides his preſent intereſt in all the edful effects of God's bountiful love, is an heir of heaven and erlaſting bliſs? and [s] who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of hriſt, ſays the apoſtle? ſhall tribulation, or diſtreſs, or perſe- tion, or famine, or nakedneſs, or peril, or ſword? all theſe e deſpiſes, becauſe he was very well perſuaded, [t] that the fferings of this preſent time are not worthy to be compared ith the glories which ſhall be revealed to us.

III. Another expedient to ſettle in our minds a ſpirit of ntentment, is frequently to caſt our eyes upon others, and mpare our condition with theirs. The rule, which Seneca ys down for this purpoſe, is a very good one. [u] When thou holdeſt how many there are before thee, look back, ſays he, nd ſee how many there are that follow behind thee; but the iſchief of mens eager appetites is, that they will never hearken this rule. They ſee a long train perhaps of perſons, that arch before them, finely attired, ſtately mounted, and adorned ith all the bravery of fortune, and theſe they gaze on: * they mire the luſtre of their condition; they ſigh to think that they

From comparing ourſelves with others.

The meaneſt.

[r] Eccluſ. i. 23. [s] Rom. viii. 35. [t] Ver. 18. [u] Sen. Epiſt. xv. * Patrick Contentment.

they cannot come up with them; and pine away, in the mid of many bleſſings, becauſe they are forced to follow at ſom diſtance. [x] Whereas, if they would now and then ca their eyes behind them, they would behold ſo many conſumin their lives in perpetual toil and drudgery, merely to obtain ſhort hungry meal, and a few hours ſleep and inſenſibility; ſ many oppreſſed with ſlavery, harraſſed with cruelty, pined wit want and poverty, overwhelmed with ſhame and infamy; ſ many waſted with long ſickneſſes, out-worn with lingring pain conſumed with ſorrow and anxiety of ſoul; and, (what is wor of all) ſo many ſtung with remorſe, racked with horror an deſpair, and alarmed with perpetual fears and diſmal expecta tions; that they would ſoon think themſelves among the fore moſt perſons: "For he that will enjoy tranquillity of mind "muſt, in proſperity, conſider how many there are that enjo "leſs good, and, in adverſity, how many there are that ſuffe "more evil."

The greateſt.

In making compariſons then between ourſelves and others there are theſe rules that muſt direct our proceeding: 1. Tha we compare ourſelves with all men, and not only with ſom few. 2. That we compare ourſelves with them in all things and not merely in ſome particulars. And, 3. That we compar ourſelves with them at all times, and not only at ſome certain ſeaſon

Upon theſe conditions, we may venture to look even into th palaces of princes, and make an eſtimate between our condition and that of thoſe, whom we are apt ſo much to admire and en vy. For what indeed is the ſtate and condition of the greate perſons upon earth, [y] but a ſtate of pompous trouble, and ga ſervility; of living in continual noiſe and ſtir, ſurrounded wit crouds, and ſubjected to the tediouſneſs of ceremony; a ſta that wants all the ſolid comforts of life, true friendſhip, free co verſation, certain leiſure, privacy and retirement, to enjoy ou ſelves, our time and thoughts, when and how we pleaſe; an yet a ſtate, encompaſſed with ſnares and temptations numbe leſs, which, without extreme caution and conſtancy, force reaſon, and command of all appetites and paſſions, cannot b avoided? this, and no better, is the ſtate of the great; and ther fore the Pſalmiſt has juſtly obſerved, that as men of low d gree are vanity; ſo men of high degree are a lye: a lye, becau their ſtate cheateth us, by appearing ſo very ſpecious, whic when nearer inſpected, is found to be ſo beſet with troubles an dangers on every ſide, that we have reaſon to bleſs God for a pointing us a private ſtation, and to pity thoſe kings and ſov reign princes, on whom he has laid the burden of a crown.

Better men that have ſuffered more than we.

[z] But, if we ſtretch the compariſon beyond our contempor ries, and look back to the generations of old, we ſhall have ſt farther cauſe to acknowledge God's great indulgence to us, co ſiderin

x Scott's Sermons. y Barrow's Sermons. Vol. III.

dering what has commonly been the lot of good men in all ges. What the ſeveral forefathers of our faith, before Chriſt's carnation, underwent, the author to the Hebrews has given us brief, but very full compendium: [a] They had trial of cruel ockings and ſcourgings; yea, moreover of bonds and impri-onments: they were ſtoned, were ſawn aſunder, were tempt-d, were ſlain with the ſword: they wandered about in ſheep-kins and goat-ſkins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented: they andered in deſerts, and in mountains, and in dens, and in caves f the earth. And, if we look on the primitive chriſtians, we hall ſoon perceive, that their privileges conſiſted not in any im-unities from calamities; for their whole lives were ſcenes of ufferings. St Paul has given us an account of his own; [b] in abours more abundant, in ſtripes above meaſure, in priſons ore frequent, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times re-eived I forty ſtripes, ſave one: thrice was I beaten with rods; nce was I ſtoned; thrice I ſuffered ſhipwreck; a night and a ay have I been in the deep. In journeyings often, &c. and if is ſingle hardſhips roſe thus high, what may we think the whole um of all his fellow-labourers amounted to together, with that hole army of martyrs, that ſealed their faith with their blood, f whoſe ſufferings the hiſtory of the church gives us ſuch toniſhing relations.

AND now, [c] being compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, the apoſtle's inference is irrefragable, let us run with atience the race that is ſet before us; but ſtill it is more ſo if e proceed to the conſideration which he adjoins; looking unto eſus the author and finiſher of our faith, who, for the joy that as ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame. And deed, if we contemplate him in the whole courſe of his life, e ſhall find him rightly ſtiled by the prophet, a man of ſorrows, nce there is ſcarce any calamity incident to human nature that as not tried and exemplified in him. Does any complain of the wneſs and poverty of his condition? His whole life was a ſtate indigence; and, as he was forced to take up his lodging with aſts at his birth, ſo he afterwards aſſures us that he [d] had not place wherein to lay his head. Is any oppreſſed with infamy d reproach? He may find his Saviour accuſed as [e] a glutton, a ine-bibber, [f] a blaſphemer, a [g] ſorcerer; and [h] a common thief d murderer preferred before him. Is any one deſpiſed and ſerted by his friends? He was contemned by his countrymen, ought a frantic by his relations, betrayed by one of his diſci-es, and abandoned by all, unleſs by that one who followed him e longeſt, to renounce him more ſhamefully by a ſolemn abju-tion. And laſtly, does any man groan under ſharp and acute pains

The inſtance of our bleſſed Saviour, a great encouragement.

z The Art of Contentment, by the author of the Whole Duty of Man. a Heb. 36, &c. b 2 Cor. xi. 23, &c. c Heb. xii. 1, &c. d Luke ix. 58. e Ibid. 34. f John x. 33. g Matth. xii. 24. h John xviii. 40.

pains of body? Let him attend his Saviour through all the stag of his dreadful passion, from his agony in the garden, to h expiration on the cross, and so he will perceive the demand the mournful prophet, in the person of the crucified Jesu verified to the full; [i] behold, and see if there be any sorro like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith t Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger: and ther fore [k] consider him, as the apostle advises, who endured su contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and fai in your minds. Set the example of his meekness and equan mity before you, confront your petty uneasinesses with his u speakable sufferings, and then it will be impossible but that yo admiration will silence your impatiences, and shame you for ev out of your repinings.

The sum of the whole argument.

" For why should I repine or be discontented with my co " dition, may every considerate Christian say, when I am und " the providence and protection of a gracious God? He ha " placed me indeed in a low station of life; but then he ha " secured me from the danger of falling, and blessed me wi " repose and tranquillity of mind, which persons of an high d " gree and eminence are not acquainted with. He ha " given me the possession of no estate transmitted from my a " cestors; but then he hath given me strength of body that enab " me to maintain myself and family, by my daily labour or su " endowments of mind as qualify me to do it in a more liber " way. At present indeed, I labour under a distressed fortun " but then I have good reason to hope that some lucky tu " will happen to my affairs, that, by the intervention of go " friends, or the success of my honest endeavours, God, [l] w " lifteth the simple out of the dust, and the poor out of t " mire, will extricate me from these difficulties. But, if t " should not be, in all probability these difficulties cannot l " long, because life itself is not long, and, together with life, all t " miseries and calamities of it are at an end; and then I shall be " though I had never suffered any thing, only that I shall reap t " benefit of my sufferings when time shall be no more. In the me " season, I have many inestimable benefits which the great and " pulent want, sound constitution, sound sleep, and no want of " petite to relish my homely morsel. For though my allowa " be both mean and small, yet nature, I find, is satisfied wit " little, and that little (when I look upon myself as a creatu " that have a title to nothing, and as a sinner that have a ti " to destruction only) is certainly much more than I can " way pretend to deserve. Nay, if I look upon others, h " tolerable is my condition in comparison of many of my c " temporaries, who are below me considerably in fortune, " parts, in health, in happiness of most kinds, and yet may h " better pretensions to the divine favour than I; in compari "

i Lam. i. 12. k Heb. xii. 3. l Psal. cxiii. 7.

" of many faithful ſervants of God who have been as remark-
" able for their ſufferings, as they have been for their piety; the
" patriarchs and prophets, the apoſtles and firſt chriſtians, eſpe-
" cially the Son of God himſelf, when he came into the world
" to redeem me: and ſhall I repine at any thing, when my
" gracious Saviour underwent worſe? Or murmur againſt
" Providence for placing me in the condition which he, by his
" voluntary aſſumption and patient continuance in, has both
" recommended and ſanctified? It will be the height of folly, as
" well as confidence, to expect to fare better in this valley of
" tears than did the Son of God, when he was pleaſed to ſojourn
" in it: eſpecially conſidering that my diſcontentedneſs will
" avail me nothing, my loudeſt complaints will never prevail
" with heaven to alter one decree; [m] whereas my bearing my
" calamities willingly and well, will be a ſpectacle grateful to
" God, and, beſides rebating the ſting of what I ſuffer, will
" probably prevail with him to releaſe me from it: and there-
" fore, being ſenſible in whom I have put my confidence, [n] even
" in him who is able to do abundantly above all that I can aſk
" or think; I will [o] be careful for nothing, but in every thing
" by prayer and ſupplication, with thankſgiving, let my requeſts
" be made known unto God."

SECT. II.

Of the Government of the Tongue.

ST JAMES, treating on this very ſubject, with great variety of arguments, endeavours to ſhew how difficult a province is for any man to govern his tongue. [p] Every kind of beaſt, ys he, and of birds, and of ſerpents, and things in the ſea, is med, and hath been tamed of mankind; but the tongue can no an tame: it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poiſon. There-ith bleſs we God, even the Father, and therewith curſe we en, which are made after the ſimilitude of God; out of the me mouth proceedeth bleſſing and curſing; my brethren, theſe ings are not to be ſo. For doth a fountain ſend forth, at the me place, ſweet water and bitter? The untameableneſs of the ngue muſt be underſtood in a limited ſenſe, to denote the great fficulty of it; that the thing is poſſible, the ſame apoſtle ſeems intimate, when, in the beginning of his diſcourſe, he tells us, at [q] if any man offend not in word, the ſame is a perfect an, *i. e.* one of a ſingular worth and integrity: and ſuch an one, preſumes, has as much command over his tongue, as [r] he at manages the bit, has over the horſe he rides; or he that holds

The difficulty of governing the tongue, and why.

m Spectaculum Deo dignum, vir bonus cum mala fortuna compoſitus. Sen. Provid. n Eph. iii. 20. o Phil. iv. 6. p James iii. 7, 8, &c. q Ibid. . 2. r Ibid. ver. 3, 4.

holds the helm, has over the ſhip he ſteers; and how far a hearty purpoſe and reſolution may carry us in the execution o this great taſk, the example of the royal Pſalmiſt ſeems to in ſtruct us: [s] I ſaid, I will take heed to my ways, that I offen not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth, as it were, with bridle, while the ungodly is in my ſight: for [t] I am utterly pur poſed that my mouth ſhall not offend.

WHAT makes the difficulty of this regimen then is, in ſom part, imputable to the member itſelf. [u] The tongue is ſo ſlip pery that it eaſily deceives an heedleſs guard; for nature ſeem to have given it ſome unhappy advantages that way. It is i its make the moſt ready for motion of any member; it needs no ſo much as the flexure of a joint to make it go, and, by acceſs o humours, acquires a certain glibneſs, the more to facilitate it moving, by which means it comes to paſs that it often goes with out giving us warning. And as children, when they happe upon a rolling engine, can ſet it in ſuch a career as wiſer peopl cannot on a ſudden ſtop; ſo the childiſh parts of us, our paſſion our fancies, and other our animal faculties, can put our tongue into ſuch diſorders, as the aids of our reaſon cannot eaſily re tify: * ſince the tongue then, is ſo very looſe and verſatile member, that the leaſt breath of thought can ſtir it, and ſet on going any way, it cannot but need much attention of mind either to keep it in a ſteady reſt, or in a right motion; and ſinc numberleſs ſwarms of things are continually roving in the fancy and thence inceſſantly obtruding themſelves upon the tongue great judgment and circumſpection is certainly requiſite to re mark their quality, as they call upon us to utter them, and ou of the promiſcuous croud that came, to ſelect the few only, tha our reaſon and religion pronounce to be good and proper t be ſpoken; which may be reduced to theſe three heads: 1. Suc as are holy and religious, with relation to God. 2. Sincer and inoffenſive, with regard to our neighbour. And 3. Mode and decent, with reſpect to ourſelves.

I. THE duty, the reaſonableneſs, and excellency of religiou diſcourſe in common converſation, is what we took occaſion t conſider elſewhere; and therefore on this head ſhall need only t enquire a little into the folly and wickedneſs of that blaſphem and profaneneſs ſo popular in this age, which [y] ſets its mout againſt the heavens, and manifeſtly oppoſes the caution an ſtrict [z] holineſs, which the apoſtle preſcribes us in all manner converſation.

The great boldneſs of atheiſtical diſcourſe.

HOW tranſient ſoever we may ſuppoſe our words to be, ye if there be a ſupreme Being, which we call God, there is ſu ficient reaſon to believe that he, as well as man, is provoked much

s Pſalm. xxxix. 1. t Pſal. xvii. 3. u The Government of the Tongue, the author of the Whole Duty of Man. * Barrow's Works, Vol. I. y Pſ lxxiii. 9. z 1 Pet. i. 15.

much, nay more, by our words than by our deeds. [a] Our ill deeds may be done upon the vehement impulſe of ſome temptation: ſome profit or pleaſure may tranſport and hurry us on to the commiſſion; at leaſt, they may have this alleviation, that we did them to pleaſe or advantage ourſelves, and not to ſpite God: but profane and atheiſtical diſcourſe cannot be ſo palliated. It is an arrow ſhot directly againſt heaven, and out of no other quiver but that of malice: and if malice among men be an aggravation of injuries, how much more ſo muſt it be in the eſteem of God, whoſe principal demand is, that we ſhould give him our heart. Till therefore, we can prove (againſt the voice of nature and faith of hiſtory; againſt the ſettled judgment of wiſe and ſober perſons, who have ſtudied and conſidered the point; and againſt the current tradition of all ages, and general conſent of mankind, which is a difficult taſk to do) that there is no God; it will be too bold an advance for us in this manner to dare and defy him, leſt we find him at laſt aſſerting his being in our utter deſtruction and confuſion. In the mean time, it would much better become us ſoberly to balance with ourſelves the gains we may expect, and the hazards we too probably run, by indulging this profane liberty of ſpeech.

The folly of it.

WE cannot pretend to give pleaſure to our hearers, for our hearers are generally of a different opinion: [b] they are convinced of the exiſtence of a God, and therefore think themſelves affronted; look upon it as an injurious reflection upon their judgment and choice, and reſent the indignity with deteſtation, when they hear their beſt friend and only benefactor, the author of their beings, and the founder of their hopes traduced and vilified. We cannot pretend to advantage the public, becauſe the public is fully ſatisfied that the belief of a God and a future ſtate is the beſt ſecurity of civil ſociety, and, conſequently, cannot but ſuppoſe that whoever goes about to diſpoſſeſs the world of this perſuaſion, deſerves to be reputed an enemy to mankind, and an injurious diſturber of their tranquillity. All that we can then promiſe ourſelves from this hazardous enterpriſe is, to be remarked (as other monſters are) for our ſingularity; or [c] at moſt, but to obtain a vain applauſe of wit, as an impious jeſter; or of reaſon, as a free-thinker; and yet, even for this, we muſt incroach upon the devil's right too, who, in all eſſays of this nature, is uſually the chief prompter; and therefore, if there be any credit in the thing, may juſtly challenge no inconſiderable ſhare of it to himſelf.

AND now what a deſperate madneſs is this, merely for the take of daring to do what every ſober man would tremble to attempt, to make ſhipwreck of our immortal ſouls; to expoſe ourſelves to endleſs wailings and woe, only to raiſe a fit of preſent

[a] The Government of the Tongue, by the Author of the Whole Duty of Man. [b] Barrow's Works, Vol. I. [c] The Government of the Tongue, &c.

ſent laughter, and in order to be reckoned wits, to prove our ſelves ſtark wild. For of ſuch [d] laughter we may very well ſay with the wiſe man, that it is madneſs, and of ſuch mirth, what does it do? What does it do indeed, but only provoke God in his turn [e] to laugh at our calamity, and to mock when our fear cometh; when our fear cometh as deſolation, and our deſtruction cometh as a whirlwind?

The ſin of drolling upon ſcripture.

ANOTHER thing oppoſite to religious and holy converſation (for the impious cuſtom of taking God's name in vain, we have already conſidered in the expoſition of the third commandment) is making his word the ſubject of our profane mirth and drollery. For it is no uncommon thing to hear perſons, almoſt in all company, uſing the ſcripture, as they do odd ends of plays, to furniſhing out their jeſts; clothing all their little conceits in its language, and debaſing it by the mixture of ſuch miſerable trifles as themſelves would be aſhamed of, were they not heightened and inſpirited by that profaneneſs. But to diſcern how God will reſent ſuch uſage of his moſt ſacred word, let but any of us put the caſe in our own perſons. [f] Suppoſe we had written to a friend to advertiſe him of things of the greateſt importance to himſelf; had given him ample and exact inſtructions backed with the moſt earneſt exhortations, and enforced with the moſt moving expreſſions of kindneſs and tenderneſs to him; and the next news we ſhould hear of that letter were, to have it put in doggrel rhime, to be made ſport for the rabble, or, at the beſt, to have the moſt eminent phraſes of it picked out to be made a common by-word; I would fain know how any of us would reſent ſuch a mixture of ingratitude and contumely. There needs no minute application I think. The whole deſign of the Bible does ſufficiently anſwer, nay, infinitely ſurpaſs the former part of the parallel; and God knows our vile uſage of it does too much, I fear too literally, adopt the latter. And, if we think the affront too baſe for one of us, can we believe God will take it in good part? The words of the apoſtle (and terrible words they are) denote the very contrary: [g] If the word ſpoken by angels, ſays he, was ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a juſt recompence; how ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect, if we burleſque, and make a mere jeſt of ſo great ſalvation, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken to us by the Lord?

The government of the tongue with regard to our neighbour. 1. Sincerity.

II. WITH regard to our neighbour, the duty of governing our tongue will conſiſt in the ſincerity and inoffenſiveneſs of our words and expreſſions. St Paul, after the uſual introduction to moſt of his epiſtles, begins that to the Philippians with a ſolemn prayer to God, [h] that they might approve things that were excellent, and be ſincere, and without offence till the day

d Eccleſ. ii. 2. e Prov. i 26, 27. f The Government of the Tongue, by the Author of the Whole Duty of Man. g Heb. ii. 2, 3. h Phil. i. 10.

of Chriſt; and in that to the Epheſians, he gives them ſtrict charge, that, [i] putting away lying, they ſhould ſpeak every man truth with his neighbour; which he enforces with this reaſon; for we are members one of another, *i. e.* as we are members of one common ſociety, we are ſeverally, in our different capacities, obliged to promote the common good and happineſs of it: but, now, ſpeech being the proper inſtrument of our conſulting and providing for theſe great ends, all inſincerity and equivocal abuſe of words at once tend to deſtroy the natural order and fundamental rights of ſociety, and are directly contrary to the true uſe of ſpeech in its original inſtitution.

[k] FEW perſons indeed have the effrontery to affirm what is directly falſe, what they know to be ſo, and may eaſily be detected in: the worſt of men deſire to preſerve ſome kind of reputation in the world, and they obſerve that there is no character more infamous than that of a liar. They are cautious therefore how they aſſert things which have no real or probable foundation, not out of regard to truth, conſidered as a moral virtue, but as an ornament of civil life: yet there are ſo many ways of miſrepreſenting facts really true in themſelves, of amplifying or ſuppreſſing the circumſtances wherewith they are attended, and of ſuppoſing this and that, in order to ſet them off in different colours, that men of a fertile invention may eaſily find means, on certain occaſions, of impoſing upon the credulity of others, without any ſcandalous conſequences in prejudice of their reputation; and all this may be thought neceſſary to ſuch as propoſe to live in the world, eſpecially if they would raiſe themſelves to any public or eminent ſtation. It ſhews, however, that the maxims whereby men govern themſelves who reſolve to make a fortune at any rate, are ſometimes oppoſite to thoſe of religion; and for that very reaſon, perſons that make profeſſion of religion, cannot, without evidently oppoſing it, pretend to juſtify ſuch maxims, or to act upon them.

THE like may be ſaid of profeſſions of kindneſs that are not real, as well as commendations and praiſes that are not due: though both theſe may in ſome meaſure be apologized for, the one as neceſſary to keep up the dependencies of great men, and to give them an higher air of dignity and power; the other to preſerve the favour of the proud, and to make us well thought on where we are dependent; yet they are far from being an imitation of the true diſciples of Chriſt, who made it their great joy and triumph, not how artfully they had conducted themſelves; not what exquiſite maſters of diſguiſe and diſſimulation they had been; but [l] that, with ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, they had their converſation in the world. This however is not ſo to be underſtood as if a courteſy to our benefactors, or all reſerve to ſuch

i Eph. iv. 25. k Fiddes's Sermons. l 2 Cor. i. 12.

ſuch as are our enemies, were to be ſuperceded: [m] there is a wide difference between civility and flattery, between caution and diſſimulation; and our bleſſed Saviour, by qualifying the ſimplicity of the dove with the wiſdom of the ſerpent, has plainly inſtructed us, that candour is not only very reconcileable with prudence, but ought indeed never to be ſeparated from it.

2. Inoffenſiveneſs.

WITH regard to our neighbour, another duty in the government of the tongue, is to have our converſation innocent and inoffenſive, free from that calumny and defamation whereby we injure his good name (which is an argument we have ſpoken to [n] before) as well as that cenſoriouſneſs and contumely which we now come to conſider.

Againſt cenſuring.

WONDERFUL is the care which the chriſtian religion has taken to correct the vice of cenſuring and judging others, as knowing it to be one of the moſt miſchievous, and withal the moſt predominant vices in the world. [o] Sometimes we find it repreſented as a bold and unjuſt uſurpation of an authority that by no means belongs to us: [p] Speak not evil one of another, ſays St James; he that ſpeaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, ſpeaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law; there is one law-giver, who is able to ſave and to deſtroy; who art thou that judgeth another? Sometimes we find it repreſented as an inſufferable incroachment upon the independent freedom of our brethren: [q] For why is my liberty judged, ſays St Paul, ſpeaking of things of an indifferent nature, of another man's conſcience? [r] Every one of us ſhall give an account of himſelf to God; let us not therefore judge one another any more. Sometimes again, we find it repreſented as a practice of very miſchievous conſequence; as it diſturbs the quiet and comfort of ſociety, and commits irreparable outrages upon the reputation of innocent perſons: hence we are told that [s] the whiſperer ſeparateth chief friends; that [t] the mouth that ſlandereth, ſlayeth the ſoul: that [u] the words of ſuch men are wounds; and that he who ſcatters them, and ſays, I am in ſport, is as a madman that caſteth about firebrands, and arrows, and death.

BUT if the reverence due to Almighty God will not reſtrain us from aſſuming his right to judicature; if the evils that follow this wicked diſpoſition and practice will not prevail with us to refrain from all cenſorious ſpeeches; yet regard to ourſelves one would think, ſhould not fail to work upon us; and therefore our holy religion ſupplies us with this argument likewiſe: * Judge not, and ye ſhall not be judged; condemn not, and ye ſhall not be condemned; forgive, and ye ſhall be forgiven; for with the ſame meaſure men mete withal, it ſhall be meaſured

[m] Fiddes's Sermons. [n] Vid. Vol. II. page 167. [o] Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels, Vol. III. [p] James iv. 11, 12. [q] 1 Cor. x. 29. [r] Rom. xiv. 12, 13. [s] Prov. xvi. 28. [t] Wiſdom i. 11. [u] Prov. xxvi. 18, &c. * Luke vi. 37, 38.

to them again. They who put themſelves forward, and are very ſevere in cenſuring their neighbours, take a moſt effectual courſe to prepare a ſcourge for their own backs; and in a very literal ſenſe procure and lay up for themſelves [x] good meaſure, preſſed down, ſhaken together, and running over; for the world is ſeldom behind hand in ſuch retaliations: whereas the man of diſcretion and reſerve, that aſperſes nobody, nor intermeddles with matters that concern him not; that puts the beſt conſtruction upon every thing, and allows all people their due commendation, is much more ſafe from the laſh of ill tongues, and beſpeaks the juſtice and favourable treatment of all that know him. So very malicious is the world indeed, that even this man muſt not flatter himſelf with a total exemption from cenſure and miſrepreſentation; but ſtill he has this advantage, that when obloquy and detraction attempt upon his honour, the ſlander is ſcattered with leſs bitterneſs, received with leſs delight, and ſuffered with leſs regret and ſelf-reproach, than it muſt needs be where a man's own conſcience tells him that he hath given others juſt provocation to make repriſals upon his good name, and, by his own hard dealing, has deſerved to be treated as a common enemy.

But it is not by men only that he may expect to be thus treated; even God, the judge of all, has expreſsly threatened that [y] he ſhall have judgment without mercy who hath ſhewed no mercy. And this is ſurely diſcouragement and terror enough, in all conſcience, to conſider, that by giving a looſe to a licentiouſneſs of tongue, we muſt expect to find no more kindneſs from God than men have found for us; and yet, [z] if God enter into judgment with his ſervants, no fleſh living can be juſtified in his ſight; or, [a] if he will be extreme to mark what is done amiſs, where is the man able to abide it? Leaſt of all are thoſe men qualified to abide it whoſe critical obſervation, and inhuman expoſing of other people ſo hinders them from examining into their own ſtate and condition, that while they are [b] ſpying and pulling out motes from their brother's eye, they perceive not the beam that is in their own, though never ſo groſs and viſible.

How to cure it in us.

That therefore we may preſerve ourſelves againſt ſo common and ſo pernicious a ſin, let us often reflect upon the words of the apoſtle, [c] Thou art inexcuſeable, O man, whoſoever thou art that judgeſt; for wherein thou judgeſt another, thou condemneſt thyſelf; for thou that judgeſt doſt the ſame things, or perhaps worſe: and in the ſtrength of this, whenever we find ourſelves, upon any miſdemeanour of our brother, ready to mount the tribunal, and pronounce our ſentence; let us firſt conſider how competent we are for the office, and call to our remembrance the deciſion of Chriſt once made in the like caſe; [d] he

[x] Luke vi. 38. [y] James ii. 13. [z] Pſal. cxliii. 2. [a] Ibid. cxxx. 3.
[b] Matth. vii. 3, 4. [c] Rom. ii. 1.

[d] he that is without sin, let him first cast a stone: to the same purpose it will be highly requisite that we frequently and seriously contemplate the last and great judgment, and then we may ask ourselves, as St Paul does, [e] Why dost thou judge thy brother; or, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. Then will come the great day of revelation and retribution, and we are not to anticipate it by our private inquests or sentences. Our own accounts are business enough for us to get ready against that day: and as it would be a spiteful folly for malefactors that are going to the bar, to spend their time in exaggerating one another's crimes; so surely it is for us, who are all going toward the dreadful tribunal, to be drawing up charges against one another. But, if we must needs be talking of other people's faults, let it be not to defame, but to amend them, by converting our detraction and censoriousness into fraternal admonition and reproof; [f] exhorting one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of us be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; and, [g] if any one be overtaken in a fault, restoring such one in the spirit of meekness, considering ourselves, lest we also be tempted.

Derision. What kind of it allowable.

ONCE more, with regard to our neighbour: another breach upon the innocence and inoffensiveness of conversation, is scoffing and derision, what the scripture expresses, as I suppose, by [h] fooliſh talking and jesting, which are not convenient. We mightily mistake the spirit of christianity if we imagine that it was ever designed to debar us from any innocent, much less from any useful pleasure that human life requires: [i] God certainly has not been more rigid to our minds than he has to our bodies; and therefore, as he has not so devoted the one to toil but that he allows us some time to exercise them in recreations as well as labours; so doubtless he indulges the same relaxation to the other, which are not always to be screwed up to the height, but allowed sometimes to descend to those easinesses of converse, which entertain the lower faculties of the soul. [k] I then our gay and jocular discourse may serve to any purpose of this kind; if it has a tendency to raise our drooping spirits, to allay our cares, and recreate our minds, when tired with graver occupations; if it any ways occasions alacrity or maintains good humour; endears society, or sweetens conversation; it is plainly neither inconvenient nor unprofitable and, consequently, is not that kind of jesting which the apostle condemns. The holy scripture is very remarkable for its great gravity and seriousness of expression, and yet for some particular purposes, such as reproving vices, and reclaiming persons that are too absurd for any solemn confutation, we find it em-

ploying

d John viii. 7. e Rom. xiv. 10. f Heb. iii. 13. g Gal. vi. 1. h Eph. v.
i The Government of the Tongue, &c. k Barrow's Works, Vol. I.

ploying a ſpirit of facetiouſneſs, and dreſſing up what it means to explode in a very ludicrous and ſatirical manner. Thus, of the fooliſh and beſotted prieſts of Baal, it is recorded that [n] Elias mocked them, and ſaid, Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is purſuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he ſleeps, and muſt be awaked: and of thoſe other ridiculous ſinners the worſhippers of carved images, no man can ſpeak in finer raillery than does the prophet Iſaiah; [o] he planteth an aſh, ſays he, ſpeaking of one of them, and the rain doth nouriſh it. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth fleſh: he roaſteth roaſt, and is ſatisfied; yea, he warmeth himſelf, and ſaith, aha! I am warm; I have ſeen the fire: and the reſidue thereof he maketh a God, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worſhippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and ſaith, deliver me; for thou art my God.

What kind not.

SINCE then it is apparent, from thoſe and other paſſages of ſcripture, • that a certain vivacity and ſportfulneſs of wit, in many caſes is allowable, and in ſome is neceſſary to banter and expoſe ſuch errors as neither deſerve, nor can well bear a ſerious confutation; the apoſtle's meaning muſt be reſtrained either to ſuch jeſting as makes ſport and mockery of the moſt ſacred things (which is an abuſe of ſpeech conſidered before) or ſuch ſevere and ſatirical jeſting as tends to the diſgrace and prejudice of our neighbour, the more of wit and poignancy there is in it. [p] A dull contumely indeed quickly vaniſhes, becauſe nobody thinks it worth his remembering; but when it is ſteeled with wit and ſprightlineſs of imagination, it pierces deep, and leaves ſuch impreſſions in the fancy of the hearers, that thereby it gets rooting in the memory, and will hardly ever be forgot. And as wit gives an edge, ſo it alſo adds wings to the abuſe, and makes it fly abroad in an inſtant. The jeſt recommends the defamation, and is commonly ſo incorporate with it, that they cannot be related apart: from whence it comes to paſs, that even thoſe who like it not in one reſpect, are many times ſo tranſported with it in the other, that they chuſe rather to propagate the contumely than to ſtifle the conceit. By this means a man, for what perhaps is none of his fault, his natural or moral infirmities, or ſome accidental ſingularities of humour or temper, or the like, ſhall be expoſed to the ſcorn and contempt, not of his own generation only, but ſometimes of his lateſt poſterity, it being no unuſual thing to have ſarcaſms of wit tranſmitted to ſtory. [q] But now, what an inhuman thing is this, to make the weakneſſes of men the ſubject of our mirth; which, conſidering whence they come, and how common they are in moſt of us, do deſerve our compaſſion, not our ſeverity, and are rather to be deplored ſecretly, than openly derided.

The miſchief of it.

m 1 Kings xviii. 27. n Iſa. xliv. 14, &c. o Barrow's Works, Vol. I. p The Government of the Tongue, &c. q Barrow, ibid.

THE heart of fools, ſays the wiſe man, is in the houſe of mirth, meaning ſuch mirth as affects to raiſe an admiration of its wit from ignominious reflections on the perſons and actions of others; becauſe in another place he declares that it is a ſport to a fool to do miſchief. And indeed, what can be a greater inſtance of folly than, for ſuch mean ends, to do ſo great harm as to loſe friends and get enemies for a conceit; and out of a light humour, to provoke fierce wrath and laſting hatred. For this daily experience verifies, that nothing does ſo ſpeedily inflame, and ſo thoroughly enrage mens paſſions, as ſuch ſcoffs and invectives, as are ſharper than ſwords. In the mean time, the ſcoffer fails in his main pretence, [r] and cannot with reaſon claim an intereſt in wit; ſince he manifeſtly diſcovers a great ſtraitneſs and ſterility of good invention, who cannot, in all the wide field of things, find better ſubjects of diſcourſe; who knows not how to be ingenious within reaſonable compaſs; but, to pick up a ſorry conceit, is forced to make excurſions beyond the bounds of honeſty and decency; and, if the word of God be true, into the very confines of deſtruction and death, ſince [s] judgment are prepared for ſcorners, and ſtripes for the back of fools.

THE purpoſe of all this is, [t] to engage men of wit and ingenuity, who place much of their dexterity, and ſome part of their pride, in the art of ſcoffing and ridiculing others, to weigh ſoberly and ſeriouſly the account they muſt one day give of the employment of their parts; and the more they have hitherto embezzled them, the more to expiate that unthriftineſs by a wiſer and more careful managery for the future; that ſo, inſtead of that vain, empty, and vaniſhing mirth, they have courted here, they may find a full and eternal ſatisfaction in the joy of their Lord hereafter.

The government of the tongue, with reſpect to ourſelves. And,
1. Againſt boaſting.

III. WITH reſpect to ourſelves, the duty of governing our tongue conſiſts in the modeſty and decency of our words and expreſſions, to which all boaſting and oſtentation, all poſitiveneſs and obſcenity of ſpeech are directly oppoſite. If we look into the family of boaſters, we ſhall ſoon perceive the ſubjects of their oſtentation are, either ſome natural excellencies, ſuch as beauty or wit; or ſome accidental acquiſitions, ſuch as honour and wealth, &c. but ſince God is manifeſtly the author and giver of all theſe, the foundation of our glorying in them is utterly taken away. No man, I ſuppoſe, fancies himſelf to be his own creator; and

Its vanity.

though ſome have aſſumed to be the carvers of their own fortunes, yet the frequent defeats of mens induſtry and contrivance do ſufficiently confute the bold pretence, and give them to underſtand that there is a divine providence above them, which can either blaſt or proſper their attempts.

The

[r] Barrow's Works, Vol. I. [s] Prov. xix. 29. [t] The Government of the Tongue, &c.

The piety of ſome is another article of their oſtentation: but as this is leſs owing to ourſelves than any endowment of nature; ſo, when once it begins to be boaſted of, it is utterly blaſted, and becomes inſignificant: for even of the moſt chriſtian actions, ſuch as, [u] prayer, alms, and faſting, our Saviour has told us, that, when they are done to be ſeen of men, and with a deſign to catch at their applauſe, that is all the reward they are likely to have. Nay, that is a reward which they frequently miſs of too, ſince vanity quite drowns the notice of the things in which it is founded, and, as common experience ſhews, men are not ſo apt to ſay, "ſuch a perſon is handſome, wiſe, and good, as "that he is proud, upon the conceit of being ſo." * In a word, he that celebrates his own excellencies, muſt be content with his own applauſes; for he will get none of others, unleſs it be from thoſe fawning ſycophants, whoſe praiſes are worſe than the bittereſt detraction.

THUS fooliſh a ſin is oſtentation, that it effectually undermines and ſupplants itſelf. It is glory that it ſeeks, and yet inſtead of gaining that, it loſes common and ordinary eſtimation. It has a ſtrange ambition to be popular, and yet nothing makes a man ſo deſpicable and uſeleſs in the world. To do him a kindneſs moſt men are loth, becauſe they foreſee he will arrogate it to himſelf, as the effect of his merit; to receive one from him, none that are not in the greateſt exigence are willing, becauſe they know it is not only ſure to be proclaimed, but magnified much above its true worth. He is excluded therefore from all commerce in life, and ſeems only of uſe to give ſport to his company; which, by ſuggeſting ſome hints, and now and then ſhewing a nod or ſmile of approbation, can make him diſplay himſelf more diſadvantageouſly, more ridiculouſly, than the moſt ſatirical character could poſſibly do. Its ridiculouſneſs.

IN the mean time, though he goes on at this fooliſh rate, yet, according to Solomon's obſervation, this diſtemper of his precludes all means of his growing wiſer: for [x] ſeeſt thou a man wiſe in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him; and the reaſon is evident, becauſe he diſcards the two great inſtruments of inſtruction, admonition, and obſervation. [y] The former he thinks ſuperſeded by his own perfections, and the latter he circumſcribes within himſelf; and yet, even here, inſtead of making inquiry into his faults and defects, he fixes his contemplation only on his more ſplendid qualities, with which he is ſo dazzled, that when you bring him to the darker parts of himſelf, it fares with him as with thoſe that come newly from gazing on the ſun, he can ſee nothing.

To cure the impoſthumation in our minds then, which occaſions this vain oſtentation of our tongue, a good way will be, Its cure.

to

[u] Matth. vi. 5. * The Government of the Tongue, by the author of the Whole Duty of Man. [x] Prov. xxvi. [y] The Government of the Tongue, &c.

to put ourſelves under the courſe which the apoſtle preſcribes, [z] to look not every man on his own things, but every man alſo on the things of others, *i. e.* to obſerve the good that is viſible in every man, and, when we find ourſelves mounting into our altitudes, to clog our wings with the remembrance of thoſe that have outſoared us, not in opinion only, but in true merit: or, if we muſt needs be looking into ourſelves, to take a full and juſt ſurvey of all; to eſtimate our ſins, as well as virtues, and ſo conſidering how many and heinous are the one, as well as how few and defective are the other, inſtead of the proud Phariſee's, [a] Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, we ſhall be led, with the humble Publican, to ſmite on our breaſts, and ſay, Lord, be merciful to me a ſinner.

Againſt poſitiveneſs.

ANOTHER breach upon the modeſty and decency of converſation (for it will not be expected, I hope, that I ſhould enlarge upon that obſcene and ſmutty talk which the apoſtles tell us [b] ſhould not ſo much as once be named among chriſtians) is a certain peremptorineſs in diſcourſe, which conſiſts either in a magiſterial manner of dictating matters of opinion, or in a poſitive manner of averring matters of fact. [c] Now, beſides that the former of theſe is a manifeſt encroachment upon the common birth-right of mankind, who have every one of them a liberty of thinking and judging, according to their own underſtandings; there is this manifeſt incongruity attending it, that no man can be poſitively aſſured whether what he dictates ſo confidently be in reality truth or no: for [d] the thoughts of mortal men, ſays the wiſe Hebrew, are miſerable, and our devices are but uncertain. For the corruptible body preſſes down the ſoul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that muſeth upon many things; and hardly do we gueſs aright at things that are upon earth, and with labour do we find the things that are before us, but the things that are in heaven, and of difficult and abſtruſe ſpeculation, who hath ſearched out? And if ſo, it is pride and preſumption to impoſe mere conjectures for infallible oracles upon other mens judgments; for who made thee to differ from another? "Since God has made "rationality the common portion of mankind, how came it to "be thy incloſure? Or, what ſignature has he ſet upon thy "underſtanding, what mark of excellence, that it ſhould be "paramount?" The great misfortune is, [e] that men of this ſanguine complexion, in relation to their own ſentiments, are generally made up of pride and ignorance, which of all others is the moſt unhappy compoſition. For ignorance being of itſelf like ſtiff clay, when once pride comes to ſcorch and harden it, grows perfectly impenetrable: and accordingly we may obſerve that none are ſo obſtinate and inconvincible as your half-witted people,

z Phil. ii. 4. a Luke xviii. 11, 13. b Eph. v. 3. c The Government of the Tongue, &c. d Wiſdom ix. 14. e The Government of the Tongue, &c.

eople, who know juſt enough to excite their pride, but not ſo uch as to cure their ignorance. But even, if this ſhould not e the caſe, peremptorineſs is certainly a thing that befits no rm of underſtanding. Wiſe men it makes diſobliging and oubleſome, and fools ridiculous and contemptible: it caſts a rejudice upon the moſt ſolid reaſoning, and renders the lighter ore notoriouſly deſpicable: good parts, by being tinctured with are made a ſnare to their owners, and uſeleſs to others; and ean parts, under its infection, are condemned to be always ſo, deſpiſing the aids which ſhould improve them.

Against positiveneſs in matters of fact.

THE like may be ſaid of that other kind of peremptorineſs, hich conſiſts in aſſerting matters of fact with ſo much poſitive- ſs, that it is attended with many ill conſequences, though rhaps of a different nature; that it often engages men in ths and execrations to confirm their incredible ſtories; that it rays them into feuds and perpetual quarrels, when they meet th others as poſitive as themſelves; that it expoſes them to the ntempt and ſcorn of every company, while the good abominate ir ſin, and the ill triumph over their folly; and yet after all, t it is ſo far from gaining credit to their preſent affirmations, t it deſtroys it for the future. For he that ſees a man make difference in the confidence of his aſſerting realities and ions, can never take his meaſures by any thing he avers, but, ording to the common proverb, will be in danger of diſbe- ing him, even when he ſpeaks truth.

IN the mean time, what is there that he propoſes to himſelf his poſitiveneſs, that may not be obtained more effectually by nodeſt and unconcerned relation? He that barely relates at he has heard, or propoſes modeſtly what his opinion is, ving the hearer to judge of its probability, does doubtleſs civilly entertain the company, as he that throws down his ntlet in atteſtation of what he affirms. He as much, nay ch more perſuades his hearers, becauſe violent aſſeverations e only to give men an untoward umbrage, that the ſpeaker onſcious of his own falſeneſs; and, all the while, he has his eat ſecure, and ſtands not reſponſible for the truth and cer- ty of what he affirms, or relates. So that, upon the whole, ugh the things which men advance be never ſo certain and llible, yet it ſeems much more decent and adviſeable, not to s them with too much importunity; becauſe boldneſs, as we ed before, is ſo known a pander to lying, that truth cannot come in danger of being defamed by its attendance and imity.

To conclude, modeſty is ſo amiable, ſo inſinuating a thing, all the rules of oratory cannot help men to a more agree- ornament in diſcourſe: and if they would but try it in the foregoing inſtances, they will undoubtedly find it to be fact —that

—that a modeſt propoſal will ſooner captivate mens reaſon, a
a modeſt relation, their belief.

Motives and conſiderations againſt it.

THESE are ſome of the duties and enormities of ſpeech, t
the purſuit or avoidance of which, the good or ill governme
of our tongue will conſiſt: and therefore, to heighten our ca
in this reſpect, let it be remembered, [g] that the uſe of ſpeech
a peculiar prerogative of man above other creatures, and b
ſtowed upon us for moſt excellent purpoſes; which we ſad
pervert, when we make it an inſtrument either of reviling Go
or injuring our brother, or expoſing ourſelves: that our breat
as well as our other faculties, is the pure gift of God, which
may withdraw when he pleaſes; and in ſo doing, ſurprize us pe
haps with an oath, a blaſphemy, or a detraction in our mouth
that, if this he ſhould not do, our tranſgreſſions however of th
kind do not fly off into empty air, but are recorded in the v
lume of his all-containing mind, to be produced againſt us at t
great day of judgment; and that, in the great and terrible d
of the Lord, [h] every idle word (as we are told) and much mo
then every wicked and profane, every hurtful and abuſive wo
that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an account thereof. Sin
[i] death and life then are in the tongue; ſince [k] by our wo
we ſhall be juſtified, and by our words we ſhall be condemne
ſince ſo great a ſtreſs is laid upon this, that, [l] if any man ſeeme
to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religi
is vain; how earneſt ſhould the conſideration of theſe thi
make us in our daily ſupplications to God, that, in conjunct
with our own endeavours, he would be pleaſed to [m] ſet a wat
before our mouths, and keep the door of our lips, that
corrupt communication of any kind may proceed from then
but that which is good to the uſe of edifying, that it may
miſter glory to God, grace to the hearers, and ſalvation
our own ſouls.

SECT. III.

Of the Government of the whole Man.

THE two great virtues relating to the government of
reſt of the body, are chaſtity and temperance: but
theſe we ſhall have leſs reaſon to treat with any great prolix
becauſe they are things obvious to every one's conception.

Chaſtity, what.

I. Now chaſtity, as it relates to a ſingle ſtate, conſiſts
total abſtinence of all manner of uncleanneſs; not only tha
adultery and fornication, but from all other more unnat
ſorts, whether committed upon ourſelves, or in commerce
any other: and even in a conjugal eſtate it requires ſuch tem

g Tillotſon's Sermons, Vol. I. h Matth. xii. 36. i Prov. xvi
k Matth. xii. 37. l James i. 26. m Pſal. cxli. 3. n Eph. iv. 29.

nd moderation, as may preſerve the ends of matrimony, and ontinue it (what it was intended to be) a remedy, and not an centive to laſciviouſneſs. Nor does this virtue reſtrain us from e groſſer acts only, but ſets a guard likewiſe upon [o] our eyes, pon [p] our hands, upon [q] our tongues, and upon our very houghts and imaginations; for it accounts [r] all laſcivious looks, bſcene language, impure thoughts, and immodeſt behaviour; l pampering and luxurious diet to enflame ourſelves; all in-ſtrious endeavours to kindle thoſe flames, and attract, firſt eir eyes, and then the deſires of others; as well as all coquetry, nd affectation of dreſs and deportment, which have a ten-ncy that way, among the number of its tranſgreſſions. But theſe things we have treated already in our expoſition of the ighth Commandment, and have only to add in this place, that, as of all vices, to which mankind are ſubject, there is none of eater danger and worſe conſequence to us than thoſe which e luſts of our fleſh tempt us to; none to which nature is more rone; none by which it is more vilely debaſed, more ſhame-lly expoſed, and more mortally wounded; that perſon we nnot but pronounce very happy, who, in ſtrength of this vir-e, keeps under his body, and brings it into ſubjection; ſince it he is conqueror of the ſtrongeſt and ſubtleſt enemy, and s learnt to be deaf to the buſieſt and moſt importunate ſolici-ions of a Syren, that labours perpetually to ruin him by her eacherous incantations; ſince by it he ſecures his native free-m and greatneſs of ſpirit, preſerves his faculties from thoſe ick unwelcome miſts, by which ſenſe and appetites ungovern-darken their ſight; ſecures order and peace within, by ſub-ing all rebellious paſſions, and keeping reaſon and religion nſtantly ſupreme; fixing the affections upon ſuch objects as ſerve their care and aſſiduity, and exerciſing the mind in the eet raptures of meditations and prayers, the thirſt of ſpiritual mforts, and the unſpeakable delights which reſult from an ly converſation, and fervent love of God. And ſo we pro-ed to

Its commendation.

II. THE other virtue, which concerns our bodies, and that temperance, which ſeems to be of different ſorts, according to objects about which it is exerciſed. For there is, 1. Tem-rance in eating and drinking, which is not only a neceſſary y in chriſtianity, but a very ornamental virtue likewiſe. [t] It ders lovely and beautiful the perſon that is endued with it: makes him reſpected and reverenced by all that know him. r a man that eats and drinks only for neceſſity, to repair the ly decays of his body, and not to pleaſe his palate, or ſatisfy cravings of a luxurious and extravagant appetite, lives as omes a man; upholds the dignity of his nature, and main-tains

Temperance in eating and drinking.

[o] Matth. v. 28. [p] Ibid. ver. 30. [q] Eph. iv. 29. [r] Stanhope on the Epiſtles Goſpels. [s] Stanhope, ibid. Vol. IV. [t] Blackhall's Sermons, Vol. I.

tains that dominion which the rational part of him, his so ought to have over the brutiſh part of him, his body: where he who is a ſlave to his palate, or drinks away his reaſon, turn a wiſe man into a fool, and a man into a beaſt; and is therefo more vile and deſpicable than other fools, or other beaſts; b cauſe his folly, or his want of reaſon is the effect of his ow vicious choice, whereas theirs was the lot of their creation. [u] Take heed therefore to yourſelves, ſays our Saviour, leſt any time your hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting an drunkenneſs; for [x] wine is a mocker; ſtrong drink is ragin and whoſoever is deceived thereby is not wiſe.

Temperance in apparel.

2. THERE is temperance in apparel, which conſiſts in o uſing ſuch habits and dreſſes as ſuit with the cuſtom of the cou try where we live, and that ſtation and quality of life wher unto we are appointed. [y] Gorgeous apparel, as our Savio obſerves, is fit for the courts of kings: nor is it any oſtentatio of pride, but rather a matter of good order and decency th perſons inveſted with high power and authority ſhould, in the very garb and appearance, diſtinguiſh themſelves from other but then, there are theſe reſtrictions which this virtue of tempe ance lays upon men of all conditions. 1. That the coſtlineſs apparel exceed not the quality and ability of the wearer. F beſides the debts, and other conſequential miſchiefs, unavoidab incurred by ſuch extravagance; [z] this certainly is an offen againſt the decency we juſt now mentioned, againſt that natur and becoming order which the wiſdom of all ages has agre upon, as moſt convenient to diſcriminate people one from an ther, and, in the matter of quality, to prevent diſreſpect a confuſion. 2. That the coſtlineſs of our apparel obſtruct n our doing the good we might otherwiſe do in ſeveral acts charity: for, ſince charity and doing good is the very end God's beſtowing riches upon us, the pretence of our deſir them, and the beſt uſe we can poſſibly make of them; we ce tainly muſt be ſelf-condemned, if, to pleaſe a vitiated imagi tion of our own, or attract the eyes of others, we lay them o in ſuch extravagant manner upon ourſelves, as to defraud ma poor and needy creatures of the neceſſary comforts of li 3. That our dreſs and attire be ſuch as ſhall neither natura nor deſignedly ſerve to the purpoſes of looſeneſs and immode in ourſelves, nor miniſter temptations to the unwary hearts, the heated and depraved imaginations of others. 4. That t much of our time be not taken up in dreſſing and adorning ou ſelves; becauſe time is not our own, and muſt not be expend as we think fit. And, 5. That, when we are never ſo richly a elegantly dreſſed, we be not ſo conceited, and highly opinionat of ourſelves, as to look down upon others, that make not the l appearan

[u] Luke xxi. 34. [x] Prov. xx. 1. [y] Luke vii. 25. [z] Fleetwood on Relat Duties.

appearance, with contempt and deriſion. For ſince clothes (as we muſt allow) add no real value to any perſon, the vanity muſt be egregious, to ſpend any conſiderable part either of our thoughts, or time, or wealth, or eſteem, about them.

3. ONCE more; there is a temperance in the matter of our recreations. For, though theſe are not only uſeful, [a] but many times neceſſary to breathe our ſpirits, after they have been almoſt ſtifled in a croud of buſineſs, and ſo divert our wearied thoughts, which, like the ſtrings of a lute, by being ſlackened now and then, will ſound the ſweeter when they come to be wound up again; yet we muſt take great care that we turn not our phyſic into food, and make that our buſineſs which ſhould be our diverſion; that our recreations be ſhort, and apt to refreſh, but not to ſteal away our minds from ſeverer employments. For long ſports and recreations are like a large entry to a little houſe; they take up ſo much room in the narrow compaſs of our time, that there is not ſpace enough left in it for the more uſeful apartments; and ſo far as our ſports do exceed the meaſures of neceſſary and convenient recreation, they are unwarrantable encroachments either upon our calling, or our religion. The like care we muſt take to make our recreations a liberal exerciſe to amuſe and recreate us, and not a ſordid trade to get money. For ſome money indeed we may be allowed to play, as much as will be neither any great concern to the loſer, nor triumph to the winner; but he that propoſes to adventure any conſiderable ſum this way, [b] runs himſelf manifeſtly into the danger either of covetouſneſs, and an eager deſire of winning, or of rage and anger at his ill fortune, if he happens to loſe; both of which will naturally engage him in other commiſſions. Covetouſneſs will tempt him to cheat and cozen, and anger to ſwear and curſe, as common experience ſhews: the man therefore who plays deep, may every time be ſaid to ſet his ſoul, together with his money, to ſtake, and is ſure to loſe all ſenſe of the ſport and recreation which he pretends to aim at; becauſe all the while that he plays, he is convulſed with alternate paſſions, and has, at one time, the deſires and fears of the covetous, and anon, the impatience and rage of the furious man, boiling in his breaſt.

Temperance in recreations.

THESE are ſome of the chief inſtances of that virtue of temperance which concerns our bodies, and we have only hitherto conſidered the tranſgreſſions of them in point of exceſs. [c] There is another evil, ſays the royal preacher, which I have ſeen under the ſun, and it is common among men; a man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, ſo that he wanteth nothing for his ſoul of all that he deſireth; yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof. Miſerable creatures! who cannot find in their hearts to borrow ſo much from their cheſts

Niggardlineſs.

a Scott's Chriſtian Life, P. I. b The Whole Duty of Man. c Eccleſ. vi. 1, 2.

cheſts as may fill their bellies, or clothe their backs; who are ſo intent upon the world, ſo moiling and drudging in it, that they cannot afford themſelves competent time for ſleep, much leſs for recreations: this is vanity, and it is an evil diſeaſe. And therefore he very juſtly concludes, [d] it is good and comely for one to eat and drink, meaning in moderation, and to enjoy the good of all the labour that he taketh under the ſun, all the days of his life which God giveth him; for this is his portion, and the gift of God.

Of Mortification.

Our natural depravity.

EVER ſince the firſt corruption of our nature, our bodies are become the inſtruments of ſin, and the deſires and appetites that ariſe from thence, are in a great meaſure our prompters and ſeducers to it. Theſe are the luſts which war againſt the ſoul, as the apoſtle declares; and yet they have the good luck to be thought our deareſt friends, and looked upon as part of ourſelves, [e] In them, when accompliſhed, we account ourſelves happy; in them, when croſſed, we account ourſelves miſerable; and in them, when unheard, we account ourſelves affronted. We allow them indeed to do any thing with us; they can put out our eyes, and be welcome; they can blind our judgments, and make ſtupification pleaſe us. Our holy religion however teaches us another leſſon: it informs us, [f] that, notwithſtanding this dear union and commerce between ſoul and body, there are no two in the world at greater enmity with one another; none that drive on ſuch different intereſts as they. Our fleſhly luſts are in a ſtate of rebellion againſt our reaſon; and to liſten to them, is to be confederates to our own ruin. Some of them are actually evil, and the reſt are inclinable to be ſo; and therefore the buſineſs of religion is to deſtroy the one, and reſtrain the other; from whence ariſe the two great chriſtian duties of mortification and ſelf-denial.

Mortification, what, and wherein it conſiſts.

I. THE apoſtle, ſpeaking of what we have hinted above, viz. that * the fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh, and that theſe are contrary the one to the other, gives us a long muſter-roll of that formidable army of wickedneſs, againſt which we engaged ourſelves at our baptiſm to contend. The works of the fleſh, ſays he, are manifeſt, which are theſe; adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, ſtrife, ſeditions, hereſies, envyings, murders, drunkenneſs, revellings, and ſuch like. Now, to ſome or more of theſe, every one of us, by our depraved nature, is inclined, and perhaps have run great lengths in the commiſſion of them. The inclination or appetite therefore, whereby we have been inſtigated to do theſe things, we muſt

d Eccleſ. v. 18, 19. e Young's Sermons, Vol. I. f Young, ibid. Gal. v. 17, &c.

muſt ſo totally extirpate and deſtroy, as to leave no remains of it in our nature. [g] For it is not enough that we neither practiſe any of theſe ſins, nor conſent to the practice of them, unleſs we make it our conſtant endeavour likewiſe, to wean and abſtract ourſelves from thoſe evil tendencies and inclinations which we have contracted by our adhering to them. Theſe inclinations indeed are no farther our ſins than we yield our conſent to them; yet, while we patiently harbour them in our boſom, without endeavouring to ſmother and extinguiſh them, they are, in ſome meaſure, choſen and voluntary, and may be ſaid to have in them the bane and formality of ſin. Though we ſhould not think it proper, for inſtance, to run into the ſame acts of laſciviouſneſs that we have formerly done; yet, while we retain, with delight, our inclination towards it, and quietly pleaſe ourſelves in the fantaſtic joys of it; while we freely entertain its lewd and filthy ideas, and ſuffer them to walk to and fro upon the ſtage of our fancies without check or controul; we are ſtill incontinent in the ſight of God, to whom our luſt is as obvious within the cloſet of our minds as upon the theatre of our practice. We muſt not think therefore that our ſin is mortified, becauſe we neither practiſe nor conſent to the practice of it; for while we have any inclinations to it remaining in us, we muſt ſtrive to ſubdue and conquer them; otherwiſe we have only forced our enemy into his laſt retreat, where, by our own neglect, we give him an opportunity to rally and re-inforce himſelf againſt us. Our ſin ſtill lives in our inclination to ſin, and will ſoon, if it be not beaten thence, recover its broken forces, and become as formidable again as ever. If ever therefore we mean to mortify our vicious inclination, we muſt not only abſtain from the ſin itſelf, but avoid all occaſions that lead to it; deny ourſelves thoſe lawful liberties that too nearly approach it, and impoſe upon ourſelves ſuch voluntary reſtraints and ſeverities as have a natural tendency to ſtarve and root it out.

A chriſtian duty.

How much it is every chriſtian's duty, in this ſenſe of the word, to mortify his evil and corrupt affections, needs not ſurely be told him, when he remembers how, at his firſt initiation into the ſervice of Chriſt, [h] he renounced all the ſinful luſts of the fleſh, and at the ſacred altar, when he ratified his baptiſmal vow, [i] offered and preſented unto God himſelf, his ſoul and body to be a reaſonable, holy, and lively ſacrifice unto him: when he reflects how frequently, in the Old Teſtament, he is called upon [k] to ceaſe to do evil, to learn to do well, to [l] circumciſe himſelf to the Lord, and to take away the foreſkin of his heart; and how inceſſantly in the New, to [m] purge out the old leaven, in order to become a new lump, and [n] to put off, concerning his former

g Scott's Chriſtian Life, Part III. h Vide Church-catechiſm. i Vide Communion Service. k Iſa. i. 16, 17. l Jer. iv. 4. m 1 Cor. v. 7. n Eph. iv. 22, 23.

former converſation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts, and to be renewed in the ſpirit of his mind: and when he conſiders how diſmal a proſpect is ſet before him, if he continues his vicious inclinations; but how bleſſed and joyful an one, if he abandons and deſtroys them: for this is a decree that ſhould always be ſounded in every chriſtian ear, • if ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die; but, if ye through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live.

And neceſſary to our future happineſs.

AND indeed, if we conſider the preſent depravation of our nature, together with the nature of thoſe felicities which God has provided for us in a future life, we ſhall find it morally impoſſible for us ever to attain the one, without endeavouring to correct or amend the other. Our future felicity will conſiſt in the beatific viſion of God and his Chriſt, in the happy ſociety of ſaints and angels, and in ſuch rational pleaſures and employments as the beauty of the objects, and other circumſtances of the place may be ſuppoſed to ſupply. But now allowing the caſe, that all the great hindrances of impiety were removed; that God were ſo eaſy and indulgent as to paſs by, in the other world, all the affronts that wicked ſouls have offered him in this; yet ſuch is the incongruity between their temper and the temper of heaven, that he could not make them happy there, without either creating in them a new heart, or creating for them a new heaven. [p] For alas, if we conſider the matter rightly, how could ſouls of their reliſh and complexion find a proper employment for themſelves in the regions of bliſs? There are no wanton amours among thoſe heavenly lovers, no rivers of wine, among the rivers of pleaſure, to gratify their boundleſs ſenſuality: no paraſite, to flatter their lofty pride; no miſeries, to feed their meagre envy; no miſchiefs, to tickle their deviliſh revenge; but all the felicities with which that heavenly ſtate abounds, viz. praiſe, love, and contemplation, are ſuch, that they would lothe and nauſeate them, as too pure and refined for their depraved appetites; and not improbably, if they had their own option, deſire to flee to hell for ſhelter, and to ſpirits of their own depravity, rather than ſtay to be tormented in an heaven ſo incongruous to their nature. And hence we may obſerve, that, as neceſſary as it is to obtain heaven and avoid hell, ſo neceſſary it is for us to crucify the fleſh, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, with the affections and luſts; becauſe God has reduced us to this ſhort iſſue, either our ſins or our ſouls muſt die; either we muſt ſhake hands with heaven, or with our depraved appetites: ſo that, unleſs we value eternal happineſs ſo little, as to exchange it for the ſordid trifling pleaſures of ſin; and unleſs we love our ſins ſo well, as to ranſom them with the blood of our immortal ſouls, it nearly concerns us, in the next place,

o Rom. viii. 13. p Scott's Chriſtian Life, Part III.

place, to ſit us down, and conſider a little, by what helps and inſtruments we may beſt be enabled to ſubdue them.

The means and inſtruments of doing it.

In examining the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghoſt, we had occaſion to conſider more largely its ordinary operations, and how far they contribute to the ſanctification of our minds and affections, and need only obſerve in this place, that, conſidering the infirmity of our natures, and the many temptations we have to encounter; how we are habituated to a ſenſual life, before we are capable of exerciſing our reaſon, and how much our wills are biaſſed and led aſide by our carnal inclinations; it is hardly to be imagined that we ſhould ever be able to retrieve ourſelves from the power and dominion of our luſts, without ſome ſupernatural aid and aſſiſtance. We want not indeed an underſtanding capable of diſtinguiſhing between good and evil; nor is our will ſo far determined to evil, as not to be able to comply with the dictates of right reaſon; we can deliberate what is beſt to chuſe, and chuſe what we find beſt upon deliberation; but then we are like a man ſtanding between two contrary roads, naturally indeed free to turn either to the right-hand or to the left; but on the left-hand way, there are ſo many temptations perpetually beckoning to us, and inviting us unto that which is evil, and our carnal paſſions and appetites are ſo ready upon all occaſions to yield and comply with them, that we ſhould certainly attend to their lure, did not the Holy Spirit, with very ſtrong arguments, importune us to turn to the right-hand way of virtue and goodneſs.

The holy Spirit.

Our own endeavours.

The great principle then, which is to begin and conduct the work of our mortification, is the Spirit of God, operating upon our minds, ſometimes by the arguments and motives of the goſpel: ſometimes by external providences that excite us to our duty; ſometimes by the aids and aſſiſtances of his holy angels; and many times by thoſe internal motions and ſuggeſtions which he himſelf immediately infuſes. But how great a ſhare ſoever this bleſſed agent may have in this work, yet, ſince we are enjoined to cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs both of fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God, there is certainly ſome part of it incumbent upon us. As we are naturally dead in treſpaſſes and ſin, we cannot indeed give the firſt motions to our minds in the buſineſs we are now ſpeaking of; but, when once we perceive it given, we have the means and inſtruments in our power that are proper to continue it, and, by the bleſſing of God, to bring it to perfection. Upon any ſudden conviction of the ſinfulneſs of our ways, we can ſit ourſelves down and conſider the motives and arguments which our holy religion has provided us againſt the moſt pleaſant and alluring, the moſt profitable and advantageous of our luſts: when we have weighed theſe in a juſt balance, the momentary pleaſures and profits of this life, with that eternity of happineſs or miſery that waits us in the next, we can then take a ſurvey of the road that leads

leads to our duty, and view carefully all the difficulties and temptations that lie in our way; and, when we have made a proper estimate of both, ask our hearts seriously, whether, for the joys that are set before us in a distant country, they are willing to surmount the one and renounce the other. After we have thus calmly considered with ourselves all the arguments against our lusts, and all the difficulties of forsaking them, and have reasoned our wills into an express consent to abandon them for ever; we can then fall down upon our bended knees, and, in a solemn manner, devote ourselves to God's service, most religiously vowing and promising that whatever we have done amiss, we will never do so any more. In obedience to this resolution, we can keep ourselves at a wary distance from our lusts, and every thing that may prove an excitement to them; at least, till we have so far gotten the mastery of them, that their nearness ceases to be a temptation to us: and, to complete this mastery, we can draw off from the enemy their succours, by fasting and abstinence; can confirm our party by a religious observation of God's holy ordinances; and procure fresh auxiliaries from above, by constant invocation and prayer.

THIS is certainly what any of us can do: and, if we continue to do this with an hearty purpose to extricate ourselves from the paths of destruction, there is no doubt but that God's grace will be sufficient for us. By the concurrence of this principle with our own faculties, this holy resolution was at first begotten in us; and therefore it will injure the character of our heavenly Father to think, that for want of any assistance, so long as our own endeavours are not wanting, he will suffer his own offspring to become abortive.

Of Self-denial.

Our Saviour's words, Matth. xvi. 24. explained.

THE only place, as I remember, wherein the duty of self-denial is expressly enjoined us, is in [q] the discourse which our Saviour held with his disciples not long before his crucifixion; and, to find out the true sense of the word, it may not be amiss to enquire a little into some circumstances that occasioned the discourse. Our Saviour, as the text acquaints us, had some time before [r] shewn unto his disciples, that he must go up to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests and scribes, and at last be killed. Upon the hearing of this, Peter, who was always particularly zealous for his master's welfare, presumes to expostulate with him, and, as the text expresses it, [s] to rebuke him, saying, be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee. There is a peculiar emphasis in the words *Hileoos soi kyrie*, which our translation does not so well answer. For they properly mean, Lord, favour thyself, or be not so negligent of thy safety as to suffer such evils to come upon

q Matth. xvi. 24. r Ibid. ver. 21. s Ibid. ver. 22.

upon thee. This in itself was no unkind speech of the apostle; but then the misfortune was, that he had made no provisional exception for the glory of God, nor any reserve for those obligations which the cause of righteousness required of his master; and for this reason he met with so severe a reprehension—[t] 'Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence to me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. The character of this disciple will hardly admit us to think that, how much soever his advice might savour of flesh and blood, there was any spark in it either of pride, dissimulation, or malice of intention, which the devil is wont to make use of in his addresses to mankind; and therefore it may be no bad conjecture, that our blessed Saviour called his disciple Satan, "because he had imprudently ran upon the same advice that Satan employs, the most successfully of all other, to ruin and undo men by, and that is the advice of self-indulgence."

HOWEVER this be, it is certain that our Saviour takes occasion from hence, to recommend two duties which himself intended to practise, though little in use, before his example taught us the way; self-denial, which being a man's own act, requires that he should suffer from himself by voluntary inflictions; and taking up our cross, which, being inflicted by another's act, (for every condemned person was, by his sentence, to bear his cross to the place of execution) requires a submissive and patient bearing of involuntary evils, or such as the providence of God ordains to come upon us from other hands. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, in the capacity of a disciple and professor of my religion, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.

Self-denial what.

FROM this exposition of the context we may observe, that by the word self in the compound, we are not to understand, as some have imagined, any of the criminal affections of our animal part, but such only as are of an indifferent nature. In our constitution (as we said in the former section) we have appetites, some that are morally evil, and others, that in themselves are innocent, and only liable to be depraved if they chance to be immoderately indulged. Of this kind are the desires of ease and indolence, of proper refreshments and honest pleasures, and of avoiding such things as are noxious and afflicting to human nature; these were in our nature from the very first, even before sin had defaced its purity, and consequently our Saviour took them upon him with our nature, though it is certain he partook of nothing that was sinful in it. To these it was that Peter, in the advice he gave his Master, addressed himself; and his Master, in his rejection of that advice, has given us to understand, that even the most innocent desires of nature are, upon some occasions, to be restrained. So that the sum of the doctrine

t Matth. xvi. 23.

doctrine we are to insist on under this head, will amount t this—[u] "That there are "voluntary severities consisting i the submission of ourselves "to many unpleasing things, though "otherwise avoidable; and in the restraint of ourselves from "many pleasing things, though otherwise lawful, which, upon "their respective occasions, we ought to engage in, as abso "lutely necessary to make us good christians."

The necessity of it in a settled state.

When we find the christian state so often compared unto warfare, it is to let us understand that there is a necessary an continual engagement of our rational desires against our sensual in order to bring them under, and keep them in obedience; an this is a warfare from whence there must be no dismission. There must be no league, no truce, no laying down of arms i it: for our enemies are perfidious, and will never keep th peace; and therefore we are never out of danger, but while w are actually fighting. St Paul, a man of miracles, and visions and of sanctity of life more glorious than either, even while h was daily fought against from without, by the malice of Sata and evil men, was nevertheless obliged to fight against himsel to cast down his mind, as he calls it, and to beat down his bod and bodily affections: and lest we might suppose that he did th from a principle of vain-glory, the affectation of singularity, or simple mistake of judgment, he tells us withal, that the reason his exercising such discipline over himself was, lest, for the wa of it, [x] he might possibly be a cast-away: and, if so great a sai was obliged to maintain this fight for fear of being a cast-awa who among christians can lay down their arms and be safe?

Now this fighting with our appetites and desires is the ve same thing as denying ourselves; and the practise of it consists restraining them, and not giving them leave to satiate themselv on their particular objects: for he that gives his appetites the loose and their fill, even of enjoyments that are otherwise la ful, brings himself in danger of being worsted by them: becau by what he allows them, they will grow so very strong, that is a thousand to one, but they will take the rest in spite of approbation.

In a penitential state.

Thus, in the ordinary course of every man's life, the du of self-denial is necessary, even though he has never fallen i any flagitious way: but then, if unhappily he has been engag in a course of sin, the reasons and obligations of it beco stronger. To this purpose, St Paul, speaking of the seve offices of repentance, reckons them up in the following manne [y] behold this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a go sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, wh vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! so tha man cannot repent, in the sense of the scripture, without bri

u Young's Sermons, Vol. II. x 1 Cor. ix. 27. y 2 Cor. vii. 11.

ing himſelf under the daily ſeverities of mourning, and vigilance, and reſtraint of delights, and labour in the works of charity, and whatever elſe may conduce to the humbling of our nature, and taking revenge upon thoſe paſſions and deſires, whereby we have offended God. And for this reaſon, I ſuppoſe, it is, that the antients were wont to call ſuch inſtances of penance by the name of ſatisfactions: not that they eſteemed them of value to ſatisfy the divine juſtice; nothing but the blood of Jeſus can do that, but that they thought them the conditions which the goſpel requires of penitents, as highly neceſſary, both for their preſent correction, and future caution: and accordingly we may obſerve, that [z] whenever the fathers uſed this word, it is either with reſpect to men, or to God; if to men, then the meaning of it is, that by theſe external acts of ſorrow, we ſatisfy the church of our repentance, and make reparation for thoſe offences and ſcandals which we gave by our ſins; but if to God, then it is taken for the acknowledgment of our faults, and the earneſt deſire we have of pardon and forgiveneſs.

to a glorified ſtate.

NOR is the duty of ſelf-denial neceſſary to our preſent condition only, whether we conſider it in a ſettled or penitential capacity; but as it has a tendency likewiſe to our future glory and felicity. It can hardly eſcape the obſervation of any common reader, that there is, in ſcripture, a certain fitneſs, or meetneſs, required in thoſe that are to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light; but then the queſtion is, how we muſt acquire this fitneſs? and by what means we are to induce this perfective diſpoſition into our ſouls? The apoſtle indeed tells us concerning our Saviour himſelf, that [a] he was made perfect through ſufferings; for it becomes him, ſays he, from whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many ſons unto glory, to make the captain of their ſalvation perfect through ſuffering: but then theſe words do not abſolutely imply, that theſe ſufferings of our Saviour were neceſſary for his perſonal perfection: he might have paſſed to glory an eaſier way, becauſe he wanted no virtue to accompliſh and qualify him for that ſtate. They imply however, that his ſufferings were neceſſary for his exemplary perfection, *i. e.* as he was to be an example to us, and the captain and preſident of our ſalvation; as he was to lead us the way, by which many adopted ſons of God might likewiſe paſs into glory, ſo it was neceſſary that he ſhould be made perfect by ſufferings, becauſe no adopted ſon, no chriſtian, can ever be perfect without them: and accordingly we find it mentioned in the chriſtian covenant, as an expreſs condition of our future glory, [b] that, if we ſuffer with Chriſt, we ſhall alſo reign with him; for it is [c] through much tribulation, (through many wreſtlings or contendings, as it is in the original) that we muſt enter into the kingdom of God.

z Cave's Primitive Chriſtianity, Part III. a Heb. ii. 10. b 2 Tim. ii. 12.
c Acts xiv. 22.

Now, if the Spirit of God gives us warning, that ſufferings are of ſo neceſſary importance to our future welfare, and yet, at the ſame time, does not lay upon us any outward neceſſity to ſuffer; this is a plain indication, I think, that the neceſſity lies upon ourſelves to take care, that we ſuffer from our own voluntary diſcipline; that we faſt often, pray much, impoſe taſks of labour, ſtrict rules of abſtinence, and have a continual watch over ourſelves, which, in the time of the church's peace and tranquillity, was called a daily martyrdom.

And even in uſe among the beſt heathens.

THE primitive chriſtians were very remarkable for this kind of diſcipline. [d] Their callous knees, and guttered cheeks, and meagre looks, occaſioned by their faſting, weeping, and praying, are often taken notice of in antiquity, though with us miſtaken for ſuperſtitious uſages, and acts of ſupererogation. That chriſtian however (as St Jerom calls one upon a like occaſion) that chriſtian, I ſay, is by much too delicate, who would excuſe himſelf from this diſcipline in the ſchool of Chriſt, when we may find, that in every heathen ſchool, they required no leſs to make a philoſopher; that is, in the ſenſe of their ſober ſtile, an honeſt and good man.

[e] EPICURUS indeed preſented the world with a very ſpecious ſcheme, when he pretended to ſatisfy the aims both of ſenſe and morality together, when he invited men to virtue and pleaſure at the ſame time; telling them that a life, which was both virtuous and pleaſurable, was purely the life of the gods. But all the other ſects remonſtrate againſt this new doctor, as one, who, by hanging out the flag of pleaſure, had covered all that was true, and laid aſide all that was great in philoſophy. They had juſter notions of the corruption of human nature; and therefore they teach, that whoever intends to be a virtuous man, muſt by no means propoſe his life to be a ſcene of pleaſure. They teach us, that wiſdom and felicity have built their palaces together upon a craggy rock, whither it is not a little difficult to aſcend: they repreſent their Hercules, as always engaging in labours, always ſeeking conflicts, always harſh and ſevere to himſelf; and his character they propoſe to their ſcholars, as the common guide to proficiency in good living. But we have our inſtruction from a better fountain, and are ſufficiently advertiſed what we are to do, when we are commanded by our bleſſed Saviour, [f] to enter in at the ſtrait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to deſtruction; but ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth to life, and few there be that find it.

Of Regeneration.

The occaſion of our Saviour's Words, Matt. xix. 16.

THE firſt place, wherein we find expreſs mention made of our regeneration, is, (as I take it) in our Saviour's conferen

d Cave's Primitive Chriſtianity, Part III. e Young's Sermons Vol. II.
f Matth. vii. 13, 14.

conference with Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, and of the ſect of the Phariſees, great enemies to our bleſſed Lord; but being convinced, by his doctrine and miracles, of his divine miſſion and authority, he came, no doubt, though it was at night that he came, with an intent to be farther inſtructed by him. The Evangeliſt has recorded the firſt addreſs which this ruler makes to our Saviour; but from the nature of our Saviour's anſwer, ſome have been induced to think, that his whole ſpeech is not related; and that, after he had done his preface, he might not improbably put ſome ſuch queſtions to our Lord, as we find the young man did in the goſpel, viz. [g] What good thing he was to do, that he might obtain eternal life? becauſe the anſwer, which is returned him, is ſo very much to this purpoſe, and ſeems to have ſo ſlender a connection with what went before; [h] Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God.

To be born again is a form of ſpeech, which not only occurs in the writings of ſome [i] Gentile moraliſts, but was of common uſe among the Jewiſh doctors. They received proſelytes into the church by baptiſm; and being perſuaded, that the heathen ſoul was, by this means, waſhed away, and a new and pure one ſubſtituted in its room, they were, for this reaſon, wont to call theſe proſelytes new-born, new men, new creatures, and the like. This was the common phraſe and ſtile of the Rabbins, and therefore our Saviour very juſtly reproves Nicodemus for his ignorance of it; [k] Art thou a maſter of Iſrael, and knoweſt not theſe things? The deſign of the expreſſion however is to inform us, that there is a two-fold birth or nativity, which every one is to undergo: the firſt is common and natural; when the tender infant quits its cloſer cell, wherein it has been ſome months impriſoned, and, coming into the world, enters into a new and different ſtate from what it was in before: but the ſecond is ſpiritual and ſupernatural, when a perſon, upon his firmly believing and embracing the goſpel of Chriſt, is not only changed from his wicked courſes, to a contrary form of living, but is poſſeſſed likewiſe with thoughts, and deſires, and affections, quite different from what he had before; inſomuch, that both to himſelf and others, who behold him, he looks not like the ſame man, but in the temper of his mind, as well as the tenor of his actions, is indeed another creature. The notion,

His underſtanding, which was before [l] darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance, that was in him, becomes then enlightened to diſcern his true intereſt, and is informed with the knowledge of thoſe great truths, which he and nature of regeneration.

is

g Matth. xix. 16. h John iii. 3. i Thus both the Platonics and Stoics uſe the word *Paliggenia*, which is no other than regeneration; the former, for the renovation of all things, after certain intervals and revolutions; and the latter, for the renovation of all things, after the conflagration of the world. k John iii. 10. l Eph. iv. 18.

is moſt of all required to know, concerning God and himſelf, and a life to come. [m] This knowledge has a powerful effect and influence over his will and affections. The belief of the great truths of the goſpel gives him a new ſet of principles, makes him have different notions and opinions of things, form different proſpects and projects, and ſteer quite a contrary courſe, to what he did before. For, whereas before he conſulted only his preſent eaſe and pleaſure, ſtudied the gratifications of his ſenſual luſts and appetites, and gave himſelf up to the intereſts of this life, the welfare of his body, and the concerns of the world; he now mortifies his members which are upon the earth, endeavours to ſubdue his paſſions, and to get above his body, and above the world. He is now governed by reaſon, and not by ſenſe; he walks by faith, and not by ſight; and the world is crucified to him, and he to the world. He calculates all his actions for eternity, and is not ſo much concerned what befals him here, as what ſhall become of him hereafter. In a word, he is new moulded and faſhioned, formed over again, and created, as it were, a-new, by being furniſhed with a new principle of life and action, engaged in new courſes, and put upon new deſigns and undertakings. He has new objects of his hopes and fears, of his love and hatred, new thoughts and ſentiments of things, and new rules for the conduct of his life and actions. Old things are paſt away, and all things are become new to him; nay, he is even new to himſelf, as well as others; and therefore very properly in ſcripture-language is he called, a new creature, or a new creation.

AT the firſt creation of the world, the Spirit of God, as we are told, moved upon the face of the waters, and was concerned in the formation of man: and, in the ſecond creation or redemption of the world, the ſame Spirit moves in mens hearts, and inclines them to comply with thoſe gracious terms of reconciliation which are offered to the world. And for this reaſon, St John, ſpeaking of thoſe that believed in our Saviour, gives us to know, that [n] they were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God, *i. e.* it was not by any ſtrength of their own that they had this power of becoming the ſons of God by believing in our Saviour, but by the power of Divine grace, proceeding from the Spirit of God. The ſame power which firſt formed man out of the duſt of the earth, and, when he is returned to duſt, will raiſe him out of it again, does create us again unto good works, and faſhion us after the image of him who firſt created us in righteouſneſs and true holineſs: for, [o] if the Spirit of him that raiſed Jeſus from the dead dwell in us; he that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead ſhall quicken our mortal bodies, *i. e.* from dead works now, and hereafter from death itſelf, by his Spirit that dwelleth in us.

W

m Ibbot's Sermon's, Vol. I. n John i. 13. o Rom. viii. 11.

WE muſt not however imagine, that becauſe the Author of our regeneration is an almighty agent, the effects of his operations upon our minds are either inſtantaneous or irreſiſtible; that ourſelves are purely paſſive under them, can contribute nothing towards them, and are wholly ignorant of the ſteps and meaſures that are taken in them. [p] For, beſides that, theſe notions are a manifeſt defeat of all the exhortations and threatenings recorded in ſcripture, and a great diſcouragement to all virtuous endeavours; they are a plain contradiction to reaſon and common experience, both of which do abundantly teſtify, that the grace of God, and thoſe good motions which are ſtirred up in us, may be, and frequently are neglected and reſiſted; that men muſt do ſomething themſelves in order to conquer their vicious inclinations, and acquire ſettled habits of piety and virtue; and that this is a work which cannot be done in an inſtant, but requires time as well as pains to bring it to perfection.

FROM what has been ſaid on this ſubject, thus far purſued, we may plainly perceive, that regeneration is that change and alteration in a man, whereby his nature, which is corrupted by ſin, is ſanctified and purified; whereby his iniquities are purged away; and he, by God's Spirit, endued with true knowledge, righteouſneſs, and holineſs: and we come now to ſhew the abſolute neceſſity of it, in order to our future happineſs.

Its neceſſity to future happineſs.

ST Paul, ſpeaking of ſome who deſired to make a fair ſhew in the fleſh, and conſtrained others to be circumciſed, tells us expreſsly, that [q] in Chriſt Jeſus, neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but a new creature. Circumciſion, we know, was an ordinance of God's own inſtitution, the ſeal of the covenant between him and his people, a mark of diſtinction between them and other nations, and a ſymbol of inward purity or ſanctity of mind; and yet the apoſtle tells thoſe that held themſelves obliged to the obſervation of it, that all its ſuppoſed privileges and prerogatives, without a renovation of their nature, availed nothing: and [r] by parity of reaſon, he muſt be interpreted to ſay to us, that our ſacramental waſhing in baptiſm, our ſpiritual gifts and endowments, our profound knowledge and learning, our obſervation of the ordinances of Chriſt, and our outward acts of religious worſhip will all avail us nothing, unleſs we have a new principle implanted in us, ſuch as influences our lives, and produces evangelical obedience. For [s] is not ſaying to our Saviour, Lord, Lord! not all the fair ſpeeches and profeſſions in the world, that will recommend us to the favour of God, who hath eternally decreed, that [t] without holineſs no man ſhall ſee him; and that [u] into the heavenly Jeruſalem, there ſhall no wiſe enter any thing that defileth, neither whatſoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.

WHAT

p Ibbot's Sermons, Vol. I. q Gal. vi. 15. r Edwards on Regeneration. s Heb. xii. 14. t Rev. xxi. 27.

WHAT all the particulars of that city of God may comprize, it does not yet appear; but this we know in general, that the company, the employment, and the happineſs of it, are of a pure and ſpiritual nature, very different from any thing here below, and directly contrary to all the ſinful pleaſures and ſenſual enjoyments of the men of this world. And therefore if we would be partakers of the reſurrection of the juſt; if we would be numbered among the ſaints, and bear a part in the buſineſs and employment, in the joys and pleaſures of a future ſtate; we muſt qualify and prepare ourſelves for it, by cleanſing our hearts from all inordinate paſſions, ſubduing our luſts, and conquering the vicious inclinations of our corrupt nature; by acquiring good and virtuous habits and diſpoſitions of mind, an holy frame and temper of ſoul, and renewing ourſelves day by day, after the image of him that created us, and the likeneſs of him that redeemed us. For this is the will of God, even your ſanctification, [a] that ye put off, concerning the former converſation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful luſts; and be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

How to know whether we are regenerate or no.

IF ſuch then be the ordination and appointment of God, that without being regenerate, there is no entring into the kingdom of heaven; it ſeems to be a matter of no ſmall concernment to us, to be ſatisfied, unto what claſs of men it is that we belong. As long as we continue in this ſtate of infirmity, we cannot but be liable to ſin, nor is every tranſgreſſion an immediate forfeiture of our birth-right: but then the difference between the regenerate and unregenerate is this—that the one ſins out of incogitancy, or want of conſideration; the other out of propenſe malice and deſign; the one uſes means for the diſcovery and conviction of his ſin, the other negligently overlooks, and thinks no more of it; the one laments and bemoans it ſeverely, the other makes a mock of it perhaps, or pleaſes his imagination with frequent reflections on it; the one, from his failings, improves his future vigilance, the other hardens himſelf in ſinning and comes every time to his iniquity with more and more greedineſs. * The ſenſe, in ſhort, and conviction of ſin, the confeſſion of it, and the remorſe and repentance for it, which the regenerate expreſs, proceed from their real hatred of it, as it is the greateſt evil in its own nature, and as it is diſpleaſing to God. Their wiſhes and reſolutions, and promiſes, come from their hearts, and therefore prove effectual. Their belief of the doctrines of the goſpel is well-grounded, which makes it permanent and laſting. Their religious exerciſes and performances are acts of the inward man, of the ſoul and ſpirit, and ſpring from a deep ſenſe of the majeſty of him to whom they are addreſſed

[a] Eph. iv. 22. * Edwards on Regeneration.

dreſſed. Their obedience to the Divine commands is impartial, and univerſal, and without reſerve. It flows from a lively and active faith, from a love of God and their duty, and from ſincerity of heart; and laſtly, they ſtrive to do all this in a right manner, and for a right end, the glory of God, and of the Redeemer Jeſus Chriſt.

THESE are ſome of the ſigns whereby ye may perceive whether or no ye belong to the number of the regenerate: if, upon examination, ye find ye do not, [x] neither ſhould your eyes ſleep, nor your eye-lids ſlumber, nor the temples of your head take any reſt, until ye reſolve upon a change. This is the one thing neceſſary; and therefore, let all your cares and projects, all your aims and deſigns give way to this. Without this, ye muſt periſh everlaſtingly; and [y] what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? If, on the contrary, ye experimentally find, that the grace of God's holy Spirit has begun the work of regeneration in your ſouls, has renewed your mind, and tamed your paſſions, and changed your lives, rejoice and be exceeding glad, becauſe your renovation, being thus happily commenced, is a good pledge, and reaſon to hope, that your names ſhall be written in the book of life.

Of abſtaining from Evil-appearance.

ST Paul, towards the concluſion of his firſt epiſtle to the Theſſalonians, praying with all earneſtneſs for them, that the very God of peace would ſanctify them wholly, and that their whole ſpirit, and ſoul, and body, might be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, makes it on their part a means highly neceſſary to this good effect, that they ſhould abſtain from all appearance of evil, *i. e.* that the whole tenor of their actions ſhould not only be innocent, but of good report; not only free from the guilt of ſin, but even from the leaſt colour or ſuſpicion of it; ſo guarded with care, and guided with diſcretion, as not to give the leaſt occaſion for any to blame or cenſure their righteous doings. To abſtain from evil-appearance, what.

THIS ſeems, at firſt ſight, to be the proper ſenſe of the precept; but then we muſt take care to reduce it under ſome reſtrictions. For, [y] ſince mankind, as we daily find, are ſo very ignorant and paſſionate, apt to judge without evidence, or according to prejudice or reſentment; ſo full of hypocriſy, and willing to exalt themſelves by abaſing others; ſo full of affected wiſdom, which they think they can beſt diſplay by finding faults; ſo addicted to detraction, and careful to furniſh themſelves with materials for ſlander; and ſo conſcious of their own ſins, and willing to conclude others under the like condemnation: ſince there are theſe, I ſay, and many more reaſons, to deprave The extent of this duty.

x Pſal. cxxxii. 4. y Matth. xvi. 26. y Smalridge's Sermons.

deprave mens judgments concerning others, it is certain, that no action can be innocent, but what, for ought we know, may chance to appear ſinful to ſome ignorant men, nor any duty ſo highly obligatory, but what, through prejudice or corruption, may be evil thought of: and therefore we ſhould lay an inſupportable reſtraint upon our liberty, if we were to debar ourſelves from all innocent actions for fear of offending ſome; or we ſhould ſtretch it too far, if we ſhould preſume to omit what is abſolutely required of us by the laws of God, merely to avoid the cenſure of others.

Is it to the good and wiſe only then, that we are thus to approve ourſelves? this perhaps were no difficult taſk, becauſe they are not apt to miſtake, nor diſpoſed to miſconſtrue our actions; and therefore not likely to be offended with any thing, but what is evidently and notoriouſly ſinful. But then the misfortune is, that this is a limitation, which the expreſs letter of ſcripture will not admit of. For that we may not think, that we are concerned to juſtify our conduct only to the wiſe, we are taught by St Peter, that [z] it is the will of God, that by well-doing, we ſhould put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men: that we may not ſatisfy ourſelves with the good opinion and commendation of the charitable and good-natured, we are inſtructed by St Paul to [a] do all we can do, that we may cut off occaſion of cenſure, even from them, which deſire occaſion: that we may not acquieſce in the good eſteem of our own friends and adherents, we are required [b] to ſhew ſuch uncorruptneſs and ſincerity, that he, who is on the contrary part, may be aſhamed having no evil thing to ſay of us: and finally, that we may not ſuppoſe any man under ſuch a ſtate of ſin or ignorance, as to ſlight his opinion, and be altogether indifferent in what manner our actions appear to him, we are ſtrictly enjoined, [c] by the manifeſtation of the truth, to commend ourſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God.

WELL then, ſince by virtue of this precept, we are not obliged to abſtain from all actions that appear evil, becauſe the moſt innocent and unblameable may appear ſo to ignorant and wicked men; and yet, in the ordering of our converſation, we are bound to have a reſpect to the opinion of all men, and to fence our actions againſt the miſtakes and calumnies of the moſt ſimple and malicious; ſince that, which to ſome will actually appear evil, both lawfully may, and ſometimes neceſſarily muſt be done; and yet the appearance of evil muſt at all times, and in all caſes, be ſtudiouſly avoided; the duty, which reſults from the precept, can be no other than this,—"That we do whatever in us lies to juſtify ourſelves "to men, as well as God; that we take all poſſible care, ſo to place "our innocent and laudable actions in their true light, that no "wrong and accidental appearance of evil may not be our fault

"

z 1 Pet. ii. 15. a 2 Cor. xi. 12. b Titus ii. 7. c 2 Cor. iv. 2.

" and that we uſe our utmoſt endeavour to avoid that appear-
" ance of ſin, which after our utmoſt endeavour, cannot al-
" ways be avoided." This muſt certainly be the true ſenſe of the apoſtle's precepts; which we will, 1. Endeavour to enforce with an argument or two; and then, 2. Adjoin ſome ſuch directions, as may conduce towards the practice of it.

The appearance of evil hurtful to our own reputation.

I. [a] THAT men, who have no other meaſures to judge by, than outward appearance, muſt neceſſarily judge of us according to what we openly ſeem to be, and not according to what we inwardly are; and that therefore the appearance of evil will give as deep a wound to our eſteem among men, as real guilt itſelf can do, is a truth ſo evident in theory, and ſo well confirmed by conſtant experience, that there needs no entering into a detail of arguments to prove it. The only queſtion is, whether a good name be of that value, as to deſerve a wiſe man's care, either to get it, or preſerve it; whether a ſincere chriſtian, who ought to ſit looſe to the world, and to approve himſelf to God and his own conſcience, ſhould let a regard to his reputation bear any ſway at all in the governing of his actions; whether, when he can honeſtly ſatisfy himſelf, that, what he doth is in itſelf innocent, though to others it may appear offenſive, the fear of hurting his good name thereby ought to reſtrain him from an action, which, by carrying the face of evil, will tend to his diſgrace. And here is the greater room for this queſtion, becauſe ſome divines, as well as moraliſts, have taken a great deal of pains to ſhew the emptineſs of that vain imaginary thing (as they pleaſe to term it) which we call reputation.

THIS however ſeems to be a great miſtake: for, if we conſider the ſtrong averſion to ſhame, which the author of our nature has implanted in us, as a guard againſt ſin; the warm reſentments we feel, and the large demands we make upon having our reputation, at never ſo great a diſtance, attacked: if we conſider the high price which both human and divine laws ſet upon it; the one, making the penalty of ſlander riſe in proportion to the perſon, that is injured: and the other ranking ſlanderers and backbiters among the number of thoſe, [c] that ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God: if we conſider the chriſtian perfection of ſpeaking well of thoſe, that ſpeak ill of us, and of ſuffering reproach patiently, when we are reviled by men for keeping a good conſcience towards God; neither of which could be of any value, if calumny and reproach were not evil in themſelves: or laſtly, if we conſider, that the main ſpring of thoſe laudable actions, by which the worthies of the heathen world both ſignalized themſelves, and adorned the ages, where-in they lived, was no other than the deſire of glory and juſt commendation; we cannot but be concluded by the royal preachers

[a] Smalridge's Sermons. [c] 1 Cor. vi. 10.

opinion, that [f] a good name is better than precious ointment: but then, to go along with him in the metaphor, we must subscribe likewise to this other observation, that [g] as dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour; so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.

And to our neighbours soul.

BUT it is not our own reputation only, but the salvation likewise of our neighbour's soul, that is concerned in this affair. Were we indeed required only to work out our own salvation, without any regard to that of our brethren, there would be less occasion for all this circumspection in us. Upon this supposition, we might do every thing that appeared fit and reasonable to us, without putting ourselves to any pain about the construction, which others may pass upon it: but when we are so frequently told, that other mens safety depends upon our conduct, and that therefore we ought to exert our utmost power to do every thing that may advance it, and watch, with all possible care, against doing any thing, that in the least may hinder it; there hence arises a duty and obligation to guard our actions against the michief and prejudice they may possibly do, by any slight shew and appearance of evil.

UNDER the law of Moses it is provided, that, [h] if any man shall open a pit, or if any man shall dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein, the owner of the pit should make it good. Now most of these laws, as the apostle intimates, had a figurative, as well as a literal sense in them; and therefore this in particular may well be supposed to denote, that, as a Jew, when he sunk a pit for the service of his house or ground, for fear his neighbour's beast should fall into it, and be drowned, was bound by the law to provide a sufficient cover for it; so we, when we enter upon any action, in itself innocent and fit to be done, should do it in such a manner, and so cover it against the suspicions of evil, that it may not, through our default, be an occasion of our brother's ruin. But we need not have recourse to allegories to find out a duty which is delivered in the express letter of the gospel. St Paul, in his epistles, very often, and very largely insists upon the obligation which all christians are under, to abridge their liberty in things otherwise indifferent, for fear of offending or scandalizing their weaker brethren. [i] Take heed, says he to the Corinthians, lest, by any means, this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to those that are weak. For, if any man see thee, which hast knowledge, sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him, which is weak, be emboldened to eat those things, which are offered to idols? and through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother perish for whom Christ died? but, when ye sin

f Eccles. vii. 1. g Ibid. x. 1. h Exod. xxi. 33. i 1 Cor. viii. 9. &c.

ſin ſo againſt the brethren, and wound their weak conſcience, ye ſin againſt Chriſt.

THIS is a paſſage ſo very full, that we need go no farther for conviction: only for our better underſtanding it, it may not be amiſs to obſerve, [k] that in relation to the ſacrifices here ſpoken of, ſome part of them was eaten in the idol's temple; which being an act of religious worſhip and communion with the idol, as our eating the bread in the ſacrament, is a communion with Chriſt, the apoſtle utterly diſallows, as abſolutely unlawful; but the remainder of them which fell to the prieſt's ſhare, and they having no uſe for, ſold to thoſe who afterwards expoſed it to ſale promiſcuouſly among other meats upon the ſhambles; this the apoſtle allows might lawfully be bought and ate in any private houſe, without the leaſt ſin: only with this caution, that, whereas there were ſome converts who well underſtood that meat could have no defiling quality imprinted upon it by its conſecration to an idol, and others, on the contrary, who having not ſo much knowledge, ſuppoſed that the conſecration left ſuch a polluting quality upon it as certainly defiled the eater; the former ſort might innocently and freely eat ſuch meats in private families, provided it was not before thoſe of the latter ſort, who, through weakneſs, having an opinion of the unlawfulneſs of ſuch meats, might nevertheleſs be induced to uſe the ſame liberty, though their conſciences, in the mean time, having quite another judgment in this matter, eſteemed the eating them little better than idolatry. Now the argument, whereby the apoſtle abridges the liberty of the former ſort of converts, in condeſcenſion to the latter, proceeds upon the ſtrength of this aſſertion—That the lawfulneſs of mens actions depends, nor ſolely, either upon the lawfulneſs of the ſubject-matter, nor yet upon the conſcience of the doers of them, conſidered in itſelf, but as conſidered with reference to the conſciences of others, to whom, by the law of charity, they are bound ſo to behave themſelves, as by none of their actions to give them occaſion of ſin. And therefore the apoſtle concludes with this noble reſolution, as ſuppoſing it his own caſe; [l] if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no fleſh while the world ſtandeth, leſt I make my brother to offend.

II. SINCE the appearance of evil then, even in the moſt indifferent actions, may prove prejudicial both to our own reputation and the ſalvation of our neighbour's ſoul, it cannot but be of uſe to inſert a direction or two how we may happily avoid it: and to this purpoſe, it muſt be allowed, 1. That the foundation of a fair appearance in the world, muſt be primarily laid in the inward ſincerity of the heart: for the ſhorteſt, and ſafeſt, and perhaps the only way to appear good and virtuous, is really to be ſuch as we deſire to appear. [m] If we firſt ſeek the kingdom

Directions how to avoid it; as,

1. Inward ſincerity.

k South's Sermons, Vol. III. l 1 Cor. viii. 13. m Luke xii. 31.

dom of God and his righteouſneſs, we have a ſure goſpel-promiſe, that all other things which we want, the neceſſaries and comforts of life, ſhall be ſuperadded to us; and, in like manner, if we make it our principal aim to approve ourſelves in the ſight of God, we may ſecurely depend upon his goodneſs, that he, who can turn the hearts of men as he pleaſes, will diſpoſe them to think well of us, and to judge favourably and tenderly of all our actions. Nay, this will follow in the way of natural conſequence: for, when once integrity, and a uniform practice of virtue founded upon religious principles, have eſtabliſhed our character, and procured us a good eſteem in the world, this reputation will be the beſt guard againſt unkind ſuſpicions and ſevere cenſures. What is doubtful in our carriage, and admits of ſeveral interpretations, will be conſtrued in analogy to what was, without controverſy, worthy of praiſe: an eſteem for our perſons, gained by what we have done confeſſedly well, will incline men to judge the beſt of thoſe actions which are not manifeſtly evil; and thoſe who have entertained a favourable opinion of us for our former good life, will be deſirous to continue it, to ſhew the ſteadineſs of their own judgment as well as eſteem and affection for us.

2. Outward prudence.

AND as an honeſt ſincerity of heart, and integrity of mind, is the beſt way to ſecure our actions from an evil appearance, ſo, 2. The apoſtle has laid it down as a certain rule, that prudence and circumſpection in our outward behaviour is the beſt guard of integrity, and the greateſt ornament of virtue: [n] ſee therefore, ſays he to the Epheſians, that ye walk circumſpectly, not as fools, who unneceſſarily expoſe themſelves to danger, to being ill-uſed, or evil-ſpoken of; but as wiſe, who are careful to ſecure their intereſt and their good name, where they can ſhelter themſelves from ſuffering and from diſgrace, by behaving themſelves with diſcretion: and, in like manner, to the Coloſſians, walk in wiſdom toward them that are without, *i. e.* toward the adverſaries of your religion, who will be careful to watch all your ſteps, and lay hold on any imprudent, any indiſcreet, any unwary carriage, whereby they may caſt a blemiſh upon you and your holy profeſſion: and upon this account, the good advice which our Saviour, in his time, gave his apoſtles, is very applicable, in this ill-natured and inſidious world, to all chriſtians in all ages, [o] Behold, I ſend you forth as ſheep in the midſt of wolves; be ye therefore wiſe as ſerpents, and harmleſs as doves.

3. Setting our virtues in a clear light.

WE muſt obſerve farther, that, as there is ſcarce any one vice which does not borrow the features of ſome virtue, nor any virtue which, to a tranſient and careleſs view, may not perhaps ſeem to have the colour of ſome vice; and as it is this likeneſs which gives room to the erroneous judgment of the ignorant, or the wilful miſrepreſentations of the malicious: if ever there-

fore

[n] Eph. v. 15. [o] Luke x. 3.

fore we would secure our innocent, and even commendable actions from an evil appearance, we must be very diligent to distinguish them from those particular vices from which they may chance to be mistaken.

THUS for instance, devotion and hypocrisy, zeal and passion, moderation and lukewarmness, prudence and cunning, &c. have some lineaments so much resembling each other, and, by being so frequently called by each other's names, are so liable to be taken the one for the other, that, unless we attend carefully to these particular circumstances in which they differ, and study to express these distinct characters in our practice, the world must be much better-natured than we have reason to expect it is, if our good be not evil-spoken of.

WOULD a truly devout person then not be suspected of hypocrisy: in his public devotions he must take care that there be nothing singular or affected; that in his countenance, in his gestures, in his voice, there be no air or appearance of ostentation; and in his private devotions, he must strictly attend to our blessed Saviour's direction; [p] when thou prayest enter into thy closet, shut thy door, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. Would a zealous person not be looked upon as passionate: he must take strict care that his zeal be guided with knowledge, and tempered with charity; that it be more conversant about things than about persons; bear a due proportion to the objects that employ it; and, above all, that it be not so intemperate and outrageous as either to eat himself up, or put him upon devouring his christian brethren. In like manner would a moderate person avoid the imputation of being lukewarm: he must take care to be moderate only in such things wherein there is danger of excess; but, in those things wherein it is laudable to excel, he must not affect moderation. About things in their own nature indifferent, he may be indifferent too, or not very much concerned: but it would badly become him to be thought a moderate lover of piety and virtue, of peace and good order; one that has a moderate concern for the laws and liberties of his country, or for the welfare and prosperity of his church.

THESE instances, without proceeding any farther, are sufficient to shew us that, how resemblant soever virtue and vice may be, there are certain notes and characters whereby we may distinguish them, not only in our thoughts, but in our practice; and that therefore, to avoid the appearance of evil, it is highly expedient and necessary, that we endeavour to express this difference in the whole conduct of our lives, as fully and significantly as we possibly can; but if all this will not do to conciliate the good opinion of a perverse world, the apostle's advice will then

[p] Matth. vi. 6.

then come in to our comfort and relief. [q] Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be always ready to give an anſwer to every man that aſketh you a reaſon of the hope that is in you, with meekneſs and fear: having a good conſcience, that, whereas they ſpeak evil of you as of evil-doers, they may be aſhamed that falſely accuſe your good converſation in Chriſt; and others, [r] by your good works which they behold, may glorify God in the day of viſitation.

Of the Deſire of Righteouſneſs.

[s] BLESSED are they which do hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled, is one of the happy ſentences of our Saviour's ſermon upon the mount, and may be a proper argument for the concluſion of this work. By righteouſneſs here, we are to underſtand the whole duty of man, in all relations and capacities; or that integrity of obedience, and univerſal regard to all God's commandments, which thoſe, that endeavour to ſerve him in ſincerity and truth, are ready, on all occaſions, to expreſs, both in their temper of mind, and outward behaviour: and to hunger and thirſt after this righteouſneſs [t] implies an ardent and intenſe deſire of it; ſuch a deſire, as will not be ſatisfied without it; ſuch a deſire, as puts men upon trying all poſſible means, and uſing their utmoſt endeavours to attain it. It is an earneſt appetite and intention of mind to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; to follow his example, and to be counted worthy of the inheritance of the ſaints in light. It is a ſincere endeavour [u] to mortify all the remains of ſin in us, to get the perfect maſtery of our affections and paſſions, and to bring them under an intire ſubjection to the law of God; to increaſe daily in all chriſtian virtues; and to walk in every thing, as it becomes the profeſſors of a moſt holy religion. It is a fervent breathing after greater degrees of charity, humility, patience, and all other graces; [x] forgetting thoſe things that are behind, the pitch of goodneſs we have already attained; and reaching forth unto thoſe things that are before, that perfection in piety and virtue, which alone can ſatisfy a generous chriſtian; and preſſing towards the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus: a weaning our hearts from the world, and fixing them upon that happy ſtate, where we ſhall ſin no more, but be eſtabliſhed for ever in conſummate righteouſneſs. In ſhort, it is ſuch an eager and importunate, ſuch a ſincere and efficacious deſire for all this, as the man, who is almoſt famiſhed with hunger, and parched up with drought, has for that meat and

The deſire of righteouſneſs, what.

q 1 Pet. iii 15, 16. r Ibid. ii. 12. s Matth. v. 6. t Blackwell's Sermons, Vol. 1. u Gardiner's Sermons. x Phil. iii. 13, 14.

and drink, with which, if he be not ſoon ſupplied, he knows he muſt unavoidably periſh.

THIS is the full force of the metaphor, and proper import of the duty; and the reward annexed to it, though compriſed in theſe few words, they ſhall be filled, is, in itſelf, of an adequate extent. For, 1. They ſhall be filled with the righteouſneſs they deſire. 2. They ſhall be filled with comfort and ſatisfaction of mind here; and 3. They ſhall be filled with all imaginable happineſs hereafter. The bleſſing and reward of it are,

1. THE great deſign of God, from the beginning of the world, was, that all mankind might ſerve him in holineſs and righteouſneſs, and be accordingly rewarded by him; and, to effect this, he, in his infinite wiſdom, has contrived many wonderful ways. [y] He has imprinted the law of righteouſneſs upon the hearts and conſciences of men; he hath bound it up with their reaſon and underſtanding; he hath ſent his Son into the world to promote the practice of it, both by his inſtruction and example; by his holy Spirit he begins the good work, where it is not, and cheriſhes it, where it is begun; and, in ſhort, he hath omitted no methods of engaging us; all that promiſes and threatenings, that kind intreats and vehement expoſtulations can do, he hath not left unattempted; and, after all this, it would be incongruous to think, that he will refuſe the gift of righteouſneſs and ſanctification to ſuch, as heartily deſire and endeavour it. We cannot ſay ſo with reſpect to the bleſſings of this preſent life: [z] the race, as the wiſe man obſerves, is not always to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong, nor bread to the wiſe, nor riches to men of underſtanding, nor yet favour to men of ſkill; but time and chance happen to them all. Though art and induſtry do naturally tend to make men rich, yet they are often blaſted in the event. Experience is a ſtanding evidence of this, that neither fraud nor honeſty, righteouſneſs nor unrighteouſneſs, the moſt likely endeavours, nor the moſt diligent application can effectually command the things of this world: but it is not ſo with the bleſſings that are better worth enjoying. There is no defeat in the endeavours after righteouſneſs. A man cannot be diſappointed, who labours to be virtuous. The love and deſire of the thing does naturally enforce the practice, and the practice brings on the habit, and the habit is continually ſtrengthened by the influence of God's Holy Spirit, till it be finally confirmed and rewarded in glory. God may refuſe, and refuſe, in kindneſs, to hear the prayers even of a good man, when he prays for temporal bleſſings; but he never refuſes (at leaſt he never does it in mercy) to grant requeſts for ſpiritual; upon which preſumption it is, that Solomon founds this exhortation. [a] If thou crieſt after knowledge, and lifteſt up thy voice for underſtanding; if thou ſeekeſt her, as ſilver, and ſearcheſt for 1. The acquiſition of righteouſneſs.

y Gardiner's Sermons. z Eccleſ. ix. 11. a Prov. ii. 3, 4, 5, 9.

for her, as for hid treaſures; then ſhalt thou underſtand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God; then ſhalt thou underſtand righteouſneſs, and judgment, and equity, and every good path.

Comfort and ſatisfaction here, eſpecially at the hour of death.

2. He ſhall be filled with comfort and ſatisfaction here. The progreſs and proficiency he makes in the ways of righteouſneſs will fill him with a ſpiritual joy, far exceeding the pleaſure, which any thing elſe in this world can afford. For God has ſo adapted religion to the mind of man, that though there be labour in the undertaking, yet there is always a reliſh, that goes along with it. The conquering of an evil habit, or a ſtrong temptation, is like the conquering of a powerful enem, , difficult to perform, but what, when accompliſhed, fills him with mighty joy and triumph. Every grace he obtains, every ſinful inclination he ſubdues, every good action he performs, is no leſs than a new conveyance to him of eternal glory, a new aſſurance of his right and title; and this, being what is congenial to his ſoul, muſt be intirely agreeable to all his faculties. But we have not time to follow the righteous man through all the pleaſurable perceptions of his life; and ſhall therefore chuſe to conſider him only, as he is drawing to the period of it: when, if ever, he will rightly underſtand the ineſtimable price of a quiet conſcience, of a ſatisfied mind, and of an hope full of glory and immortality: when, if ever, he will find that, which was always a continual feaſt, then a ſovereign cordial, and food of angels; for never certainly is peace and comfort more ſeaſonable than at this inſtant.

[b] What an unſpeakable ſatisfaction then muſt it be to a dying man, when, if he looks backward, he ſees a life well ſpent; if forward, he has before him a bright proſpect of immortal glory: when he can ſay, with king Hezekiah, [c] Remember now, O Lord, I beſeech thee, how I walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart; or, with the great apoſtle, even when within view of his diſſolution, [d] I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous judge, ſhall give me at that day. It muſt needs, I ſay, be an unſpeakable and inconceivable ſatisfaction for a man in his laſt hour, when he is taking leave of his body, and ſhaking hands with the whole world; when all are ſad about him, and concerned for him; then to conſider, that there is a better ſtate, and that he has a title to it; that, when his [e] earthly tabernacle ſhall be diſſolved, he has a building with God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; that, when he ſhall ceaſe to converſe with men, he ſhall dwell with God, and converſe with angels; in a word, that he is to leave

b Norris's Diſcourſes, Vol. II. c Iſa. xxxviii. 3. d 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. e 2 Cor. v. 1.

leave nothing but vanities and ſhadows behind him, and that he has the ſolid and real happineſs of a whole eternity before him. What a mild and unterrifying thing is death to ſuch a man as this, and with what ſerenity and chearfulneſs does he entertain its ſummons! he can ſmile in the phyſician's face, when he hears him pronounce his ſickneſs deſperate; can receive his ſentence without trembling, and if his ſenſes hold out ſo long, can hear even his paſſing-bell without diſturbance. So true is that of the prophet, [f] the work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs, and aſſurance for ever.

3. THEY ſhall be filled with all imaginable happineſs hereafter. For when all their ſins ſhall be pardoned and done away; when their righteouſneſs ſhall be advanced to a full ſtrength and perfection; when they [g] ſhall awake up after the likeneſs of God, and, with joyful acclamations, be conducted into his glorious preſence; ſo far ſhall their happineſs be from falling ſhort of their preſent expectation, that it will far exceed, not only what eye hath ſeen, or ear heard, but every thing, that can now enter into the heart of man to conceive: for [h] they ſhall be before the throne of God, and he, that ſitteth on the throne, ſhall dwell among them. They ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more: the Lamb, which is in the midſt of the throne, ſhall feed them, and ſhall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God, who is their portion and their inheritance, [i] in whoſe preſence there is fulneſs of joy, and at whoſe right hand there are pleaſures for evermore, ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes. And happineſs hereafter.

[k] FINALLY then, my brethren, ſince godlineſs has the promiſes both of this life, and of that which is to come, we cannot conclude better, than with St Paul's advice to the Philippians; whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things, and the God of peace ſhall be with you.

f Iſa. xxxii. 17. g Pſal. xvii. 15. h Rev. vii. 15. i Pſal. xvi. 11. k Phil. iv. 8. 9.

FINIS.

BRITISH
11 SE 73
MUSEUM

AN

INDEX

OF THE

PRINCIPAL MATTERS contained in this VOLUME.

A

ACTIONS, how we become accountable for other mens actions 219, 220.

Admiration, the nature and uſe of that paſſion 428.

Admonition, one duty of the married ſtate 368. One office of friendſhip 379.

Advantages, worldly, their uncertainty and emptineſs 382.

Afflictions, reaſons for bearing them with patience 300. The benefits ariſing from them 302.

Almſgiving, the manner and meaſure of it, 404, 405.

Anger, the uſe of this paſſion, 428. Why more peculiarly called paſſion, 434. Reſtrained by meekneſs, ibid. The deformity and miſchiefs of immoderate anger, and how to avoid it, 437.

Apollonius Tyanæus, the account of his miracles trifling and ridiculous 37. Notes.

Apoſtles, they were far from being credulous 7. A general account of their character 60. Chriſt's commiſſion to them, the firſt branch of it 91. The ſecond branch of it 98. The third 117. The manner of their preaching 119. The fourth branch of their commiſſion 130. The fifth branch of it 136. The deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon them 140. The extraordinary gifts with which they were furniſhed 143, 144, 145, 146. That they did not think the day of judgment near at hand in their days 237. Why they expreſſed themſelves as they did in that matter 239.

Apparel, rules for preſerving temperance therein 464.

Apprehenſions, wrong ones concerning God, a hindrance to our delighting in him 288.

Arch-biſhops. See Metropolitans.

Armillus, the Jewiſh ſtory of him 86. Notes.

Aſcenſion of Chriſt, whether there were more than one 22 to 26. The reality, manner and ends of it 29, 30, 31.

Aſſiſtance promiſed in the goſpel 70, 469.

Aſſiſtance, one office of friendſhip 378.

Atheiſtical diſcourſe. See Diſcourſe.

Attention neceſſary in prayer 322.

Attributes of God, they are a ground for our loving God 277. For our fearing him 289. For our truſting in him 294. They ſhould be made the ſubject of our ſerious meditation 416.

B

Bad company, the miſchiefs of it 413.

Baptiſm, the means of our admiſſion into the church 95.

Beneficence. See Charity.

Biſhops

Biſhops, that they were the ſupreme governors of the church 106. The ſmall diſtinction between them and the preſbyters at firſt 111. That biſhops were all equal 113. Ordination and confirmation, their particular work 124.
Blemiſhes, natural, perſons not to be derided, but pitied for them 400.
Bleſſedneſs. See Happineſs.
Bodies, the difference between the preſent and future bodies of the righteous 207.
Boldneſs, or confidence, a concomitant of lying 460.
Bounty to the poor, the reaſonableneſs of it 402. Strongly enjoined both in the Old and New Teſtament 403. The manner and meaſure of it 405. Motives and encouragements to it, from the pleaſure, ſecurity, and profit of it 408, &c. See Poor.

C

Candour conſiſtent with prudence 454.
Captives, duties towards them 401.
Catechizing, and the primitive manner of it 120, &c. Its uſe, and how it is now neglected 122.
Cenſoriouſneſs, the great evil of it 454. Arguments againſt it ibid. How to cure it in us 455.
Cenſures, the power of the church in relation to them, 132, &c.
Ceremonial law of the Jews, that it has actually ceaſed, never to be reſtored 65. The meaning of its abiding for ever 66. Its imperfection 68. Supplied by the goſpel 68, &c.
Charity, St Paul's excellent deſcription of it explained 336, &c. Our obligations to it from the nature of the things, and from the nature of God 339. Our peculiar obligations to it as chriſtians 341. Its great excellency 342. The rule of it ibid. The reaſonableneſs of it, and motives to it 344. The extent of it to our enemies 346, &c.
Charity to the poor. See Bounty.
Charity ſchools recommended 394.
Chaſtity, wherein that virtue conſiſt and its commendation 462.
Chriſt, the meaning of the word 36.
Chriſtianity, its excellency 60. That its propagation was not owing to natural means 77, &c. Why learning and the ſecular power were not employed in it 79. The dangers that it has been in, and how God has protected it 137.
Chriſtians, primitive, their courage in ſuffering 155. Notes. Their extraordinary charity 346. How they prayed for their governors 363. Notes. Their remarkable ſelf-denial 472.
Chriſts, falſe ones 37. Notes.
Church, its riſe and nature 91. Its regularity and unity 92, 93. Its ſpirituality and viſibility 93, 94. The means of our admiſſion into it 94. And continuance in it 95. Its officers 98. Three orders in it 106. Biſhops the ſupreme governors in it ibid. Its power to appoint rites 130. And paſs cenſures 132. Its perpetuity 136. The reaſons of God's protecting it 139.
Churches, the means of union between diſtinct churches 96.
Comber, Dr. his opinion of biſhops and preſbyters 112.
Comforting, one office of the Spirit 155.
Comforts of religion 488.
Commiſſion of Chriſt to his apoſtles, the extent of it 90, &c.
Company, bad, the miſchiefs of it 413.
Conflagration of the world, an antient tradition 229. A deſcription of it 231.
Conſideration, the want of it, the chief occaſion of ſin and vice 418. See Meditation.
Conſtancy, the duty of friendſhip 380.
Contentment, what 439. The reaſonableneſs of it, from the conſideration of God's bounty, and how few things are really neceſſary. 439. From the conſideration of divine

divine providence 441. From the conſideration of ourſelves 443. From comparing ourſelves with others 445. From the conſideration of the ſufferings of good men of old, and eſpecially of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt 447. The ſum of the whole argument 448.
Converſion of others to be endeavoured by us 397. Motives to it 399.
Creation, the works of it a proper object of our meditation 417.
Creation, new, under the goſpel, what 475.
Croſs, the meaning of taking it up 472.

D

Deacons, their inſtitution and office 98. Why they might not conſecrate the elements in the Lord's Supper 123.
Delight in God, what 283. The reaſonableneſs of it, from the conſideration of natural, moral, and heavenly delights 283, &c. The advantages of it 186. How to poſſeſs our ſouls with it 287. Impediments to it ibid.
Devil prompts men to wickedneſs, and how he is to be defeated 418.
Diſcipline of the primitive church, and how it may be reſtored 132, &c.
Diſcontent, arguments againſt it 445. See Contentment.
Diſcourſe, religious, in converſation, the uſefulneſs and great neglect of it 395.
Diſcourſe, atheiſtical, the great boldneſs of it 450. The folly and madneſs of it 451.
Diſſimulation, the evil of it 452, &c.
Divinity, poſitive, polemical, moral, and caſuiſtical 126.
Drollery upon ſcripture, the ſinfulneſs it 452.
Duties to God, our natural obligations to them 276. The internal duties we owe to him 277, &c.
Duties towards our neighbour 1. Univerſal love and charity 336. 2. Juſtice 353. 3. Mercy 388.
Duties of princes and ſubjects 360. Of paſtors and people 363. Of huſbands and wives 366. Of maſters and ſervants 372. Of friends towards one another 376. Of ſuperiors in rank, &c. and their reſpective inferiors 382.
Duties towards ourſelves, reſpecting, 1. The government of our thoughts 410. 2. The government of our paſſions and affections 428. 3. The government of the tongue 449. 4. The government of the whole man 462, &c.

E

Elders of the church, who they were 104.
Endeavours, our own, neceſſary to the work of mortification 469.
Envy, contrary to charity 336.
Epicurus, his ſcheme, as repreſented by others 474.
Equity, what 373.
Eternity of hell torments proved from reaſon and ſcripture 262. From the nature of ſin, and the diſpoſition of ſinners 265. From God's proceedings with us 266. And the neceſſary ſanctions of his laws 267. An objection anſwered 268. The ſum of the whole argument 271. And a final exhortation thereupon 272.
Evil appearance, what it is to abſtain from it, and the extent of that duty 479. Motives to abſtain from it, becauſe it is hurtful to our own reputation 481. And to our neighbour's ſoul 482. Directions for avoiding it, as, 1. Inward ſincerity 483. 2. Outward prudence 494. 3. Setting our virtues in a clear light, ſo that they may not be miſtaken for vices ibid.
Exaltation of Chriſt, what we are to obſerve from thence 33.
Excommunication, the ſeveral kinds of it among the Jews 132. Practiſed by the chriſtian church 133.

F

Fear of God, the reaſonableneſs and importance of it 289. The benefits of it 292. Means of poſſeſſing our ſouls with it ibid. and 294.

Fear of man, inſtances of its prevailing in us over the fear of God 290. Why it is apt to do ſo 291. The folly and ſinfulneſs of it 292.
Fervency, a proper qualification of prayer 325.
Fidelity, a duty of the married ſtate 367. One office of friendſhip 377.
Fire, how immaterial beings may be tormented with it 256.
Forms of prayer not prohibited, but in ſome places commanded in ſcripture 326. The expediency of them 328.
Friendſhip, the neceſſity and benefit of friendſhip 376. The offices of it 377, &c.

G

Gehenna, whence it came to be a name for hell 253.
Gifts of the Spirit, different ſorts of them 143.
Gifts, extraordinary 143. Neceſſary to the firſt chriſtians 145. How long they continued in the church 147.
Gifts, ordinary 152, &c. Their neceſſity 157.
Glory, different degrees of it in heaven, proved from reaſon and ſcripture 248. Upon what account it is ſo 250.
God, our duty to love him 277. To delight in him 28. To fear him 289. To truſt in him 294. To ſubmit to him 300. Purity of heart neceſſary to recommend ourſelves to him 303. Our duty to worſhip him, and pray unto him 314. To praiſe him, and give thanks unto him 329. What induced him to bring creatures into being 383. His nature and works proper objects of our meditation 416.
Good and evil, their moral diſtinction 275.
Good men, how they were expoſed to ſufferings 446. Their happineſs 448.
Goodneſs of God, it is a ground for truſt in him 294.
Goſpel, its advantages above the law 69.
Government, the reaſon and neceſſity of it 359.
Grace, under what notions the grace of the Spirit may be conſidered 161.
Gratitude, what, and the reaſonableneſs of it 387.
Grief, the uſe of that paſſion 428.

H

Haggai, his prophecy of the Meſſiah 41.
Hatred, the uſe of that paſſion 428.
Heart, what it ſignifies in the ſcripture lauguage 410.
Heathens, why they rejected Chriſt at firſt 81.
Heaven, its happineſs inexplicable 241. Its locality 242. Its beauty and magnificence 224. Its rational pleaſures and enjoyments ibid. Its company 246. Holineſs neceſſary to the enjoyment of it 247. Different degrees of glory in it 248, &c. Curious queſtions about it, not to be reſolved 253.
Heavenly-mindedneſs, the chriſtian obligation to it 35. What it implies 308. Reaſonableneſs of it from the light of nature 309. From revelation 310. From the reſurrection of Chriſt ibid. The benefits of it 311, and 313.
Hell, the nature of it 253. The reality of its fire 254. That there is now a hell 256. Conjecture concerning the place of it 257. deſcription of it, and its ſad eſtate 259. Different degrees of puniſhment in it, and upon what account 261. The eternity of its torment proved 262, &c.
Hereſies, how chriſtianity was preſerved in the midſt of them 137.
Holineſs neceſſary to happineſs 24 &c.
Holy Ghoſt, his deſcent upon the poſtles 140. The circumſtances it 141. His extraoadinary gi 143. That he is communicat now 148. That he operates up our minds 151. His ordinary g

152, &c. He assists us in the duty of mortification 466.
Honours, the original design of conferring them 386.
Hope, the use of that passion 428.
Humility, a necessary qualification for prayer, 323 This virtue described 422. It is a christian duty ibid. The reasonableness of it, 423. The benefits of it, 425. The means of attaining it, 426.
Humility of Christ, 422, 427.
Husband and wives, their duties, 366, &c.
Hypocrisy, how to avoid the suspicion of it, 484.

I

Identity of a body, wherein it consists, 205.
Idleness, the mischievous effects of it, 414.
Idols, of eating meats offered to them, 483.
Jealousy, a terrible passion, and how to be prevented, 368.
Jerusalem, its destruction by the Romans particularly foretold by our Saviour, 73.
Jesting, what kind of it lawful, and what not, 456.
Jesus Christ, the manner of his resurrection, 12. The purposes of it, 13. His ascension, and whether he ascended more than once 22, &c. The matter of his discourses after his resurrection, 26. The reality, manner, and ends of his ascension, 29. His session at God's right hand, 31. That he is the true Messias, 36, &c. Proved from the fulfilment of prophecies, 45. From his miracles, 54. From his own predictions, 72. From the speedy propagation of his religion, 75. Why he was not generally owned as such by the Gentiles, 81. And by the Jews, 83. His commission to his apostles, 91, &c. He sends down the Holy Ghost upon them, 140. His second coming, 226. He was a pattern of humility, 222. &c. Of meekness, 434, &c. Of great patience under sufferings and afflictions, 447.
Jews, their sins no obstruction to the Messiah's coming, 43. Their distracted circumstances, 66. Their miseries in the destruction of Jerusalem, 73. Causes of their infidelity, 82. Why the present Jews are not converted, 85, &c. Their notion of two Messiahs, 86. Notes. What is to be done in order to their conversion, 86, &c. Whether the antient Jews had right notions of the separate state of the soul, 179.
Ignorance, the unhappiness of it to the soul, 393.
Illumination, a gift of the Spirit, 153.
Immortality of the soul proved from scripture and antiquity, 171. From universal consent, 174. From the qualities of the soul, its desire of happiness, and relation to God, 175, 176. From its desire of immortality, and apprehensions of futurity, 177. The influence of this doctrine, 180.
Imposition of hands, the design of it, 117.
Imposition in matters of opinion, the unreasonableness of it, 461.
Inconsideration, a hindrance to our delighting in God, 207. The chief occasion of sin and vice, 418.
Inferiors, their duty to their superiors, 382, &c.
Injustice, the heinousness, unprofitableness, uneasiness, desperateness, and folly of that sin, 357.
Inoffensiveness, one duty in the government of our tongues with respect to our neighbour, wherein it consists, 454.
Instruction proper for the ignorant, 393.
Joy, the use of that passion, 428.
Judgment, no particular one before the resurrection, 186.
Judgment, future, proved from universal consent, 209. From the administration of providence, 212. That it will be universal with respect

ſpect to perſons, 214, &c. And with reſpect to things, 218, &c. How long the time of it may laſt, 224. The ſolemnity and proceſs of it, 225. Some circumſtances of it, 226, &c. How men will then be differently affected, 232. Concerning the time of it, 234. Why men are left ignorant in that reſpect, 239. It will come ſuddenly 240. The uſe to be made of it, ibid.

Juſtice, what, and its relation to mens natural and acquired rights, 353. Our obligation to it from the dictates of nature, 354. From the nature, providence, and revealed will of God, 355. The rules of it with the limitation and excellency of that rule, 356.

Juſtice, relative, between prince and ſubject, 359. Between paſtor and people, 363. Between huſband and wife, 366. Between maſter and ſervant, 372. Between friend and friend, 376. Between ſuperiors in rank, parts, riches and beneficence, and their reſpective inferiors, 382.

Juſtice and equity, the diſtinction between them, 373.

K

Kings, their duty to their ſubjects, 360, &c.

Knowledge of God, it is a ground for truſt in him, 294.

L

Lactantius, his diſcourſe concerning mercy, 393.

Languages, the gift of them to the apoſtles, 144. The neceſſity of it, 145.

Laymen not ordinarily allowed to preach, 118. When allowed to baptize, 123.

Learning, a neceſſary qualification for a miniſter, 126.

Liturgy of the church of England, its excellency, 328.

Love to God, what, 277. Reaſons for it, from his attributes, his relation to us, and his being the author of love in us, 277, 278. The properties and ſigns of it, 280. Miſtakes about it, 282. Means to attain it, ibid.

Love, the uſe of that paſſion, 428.

Loving our enemies, the occaſion of our Saviour's commanding that duty 345. Wherein it conſiſts, 346. An objection againſt it anſwered, 349. Another objection, 350. Motives to this duty, from the conſideration of our enemy, ibid. From the nature of the duty, and the example of God, 351, 352.

M

Mahometan religion, what its ſucceſs was owing to, 75, 76.

Malice, the ill effects of it, 345.

Meditation, religious, the proper object of it, 416. The excellency of it, 418. It tends to preſerve us from ſin, and to recover us from it, ibid. To excite us to piety and virtue, 421. An exhortation to it, ibid.

Meekneſs, what, 434. A chriſtian virtue, and exemplified in Chriſt, 435. The excellency of it, 436. Means of attaining to it, 437.

Mercy, what, and the objects of it, 388. It is ſtrongly inſtanced in our nature, 389. Agreeable to the nature and will of God, and exemplified by Chriſt, 390. The excellency of it, 391. It engages the mercy of men, and of God, 392. What kind of mercy is to be exerciſed towards the ignorant, 393. Towards the wicked and obſtinate, 397. Towards the infirm, ſick, and oppreſſed, 400, 401. Towards the poor, 402, &c.

Meſſiah, the meaning of the word, 36. Scripture promiſes and characters of him, 37. Expected by the Jews, at the time of our Saviour's coming, 38. And by the Gentiles, 40. The time of his coming long ſince paſt, 41. The promiſes of his coming not conditional, but abſolute, 43. That Jeſus is the Meſſiah, proved from the

the fulfilment of prophecies, 45. From his miracles, 54. An objection of the Jews answered, 62. That he is the Messiah, proved from his own predictions, 72. From the wonderful propagation of his religion, 75. Why he was not owned to be the Messiah by the Gentiles, 81. By the Jews, 83.

Metropolitans, their rise and jurisdiction, 113. Ministers, a distinct body of men in the church, 98. Three orders of them, 101. Their qualifications, 114. Their designation to their office, 117. Their powers and offices, ibid.

Miracles, how to distinguish true ones from false, 56. Miracles of Christ, a proof of his being the Messiah, 54. Not diabolical, 55. That they were wrought by a divine power, proved from the nature of them, 57. From the character of Christ and his apostles, 60. From the nature of his religion, ibid. The absurdity of supposing them to be diabolical, 61.

Miseries which affect mens bodies, 400.

Moderation, the things about which it is conversant, 484.

Modesty what, and its opposites, 458. The excellency of it, 462.

Morality of our thoughts, wherein it consists, 412.

Mortification, wherein it consists, 466. It is a christian's duty, and necessary to our future happiness, 467, 468. The means and instruments of performing it, 469.

N

Necessities of our nature but few, 439.

Nicodemus, our Saviour's discourse with him, 475.

Niggardliness condemned, 465.

Norris, master his notion of love to God, 279. Notes.

O

Operations of the Spirit, the reality of them, 148. Their imperceptibleness, and our ignorance of the manner of them, no objection against them, 149, 150. The several kinds of them 153, &c. The necessity of them, 157. The Platonic and Pelagian notion herein confuted, 158. They work suitably to our rational faculties, 160. Must be attended with endeavours, 162. Are gradual and imperceptible, 163. Not instantaneous, nor irresistible, 164, 165. Consistent with the freedom of our wills, 166.

Ostentation, its vanity, 458. The ridiculousness of it, 459. How to cure ourselves of it, ibid.

P

Paliggenesia, how that word is used by the heathen moralists, 475. Notes.

Pardon, the assurances of it in the gospel, 70.

Passions and affections, how they differ, 428. Not sinful, but useful, ibid. Were inherent in Christ, and will always be a part of our nature, 429. To regulate them, is to place them upon proper objects, to restrain them from being excessive, and to govern them all, 430, 431. The mischiefs of not ruling them, and the benefits of doing them ibid. Rules for this purpose, 433.

Pastors, their duty to their people, 363. The people's duty to them, 364.

Patience, the nature of it, 300. The reasonableness of it, ibid. Its benefits and advantages, 302.

Peace of mind secured by governing the passions, 431.

Persecutions, the church preserved in the midst of them, 138.

Platonicks, how they use the word regeneration, 475. Notes.

Poor, charity towards them, 402. Why they are ordained to be among us, 404. Of giving alms to them, 405. Other instances of mercy towards them, 406. We must lend to them without usury, 407.

Poor man, a deſcription of his ſtate, 384.
Poſitiveneſs in matters of ſpeculation, the unreaſonableneſs of it, 460. And in matters of fact, 461.
Poverty, none to be deſpiſed upon the account of it, 384. Not ſo bad a ſtate as uſually accounted, 443.
Praiſe and thankſgiving, the diſtinction between them, 329. What they imply, 330. The reaſonableneſs of praiſe, from the nature of God, 331. From his dealings with us, 332. From the excellency of the duty itſelf, as good, pleaſant, and comely 333, 335.
Prayer, what it is, 314. The grounds of it, ibid. The reaſonableneſs of it, 316. The pleaſure and honour of it, ibid. The benefits and advantages of it, 317. An objection againſt it anſwered, 318. The requiſites of it, 320, &c. The ſeveral kinds of it, as public and private, 324. Expediency of a form of prayer, 326.
Preaching, the work of Chriſt's miniſters, 119. What it was in the apoſtles time, how it altered, and what it is now, 120.
Preſbytery, that it could not be changed into epiſcopacy, 110.
Pride, the unreaſonableneſs of it, 386, &c. The miſchiefs of it, 427.
Primates, their riſe and juriſdiction, 113.
Priſoners, duties towards them, 401.
Promiſes of the goſpel, their excellency above thoſe of the law, 70.
Prophecies, their fulfilment, a proof that Jeſus is the Meſſiah, 45. Why they are obſcure, 49. The chriſtian interpretation of them vindicated, 52.
Proſperity, the danger of it, 433.
Prudence, the duty of a chriſtian, 436.
Puniſhment, the different degrees of it in hell, 261.
Purgatory, the riſe of that notion, and how it came to be eſtabliſhed 188, &c. Notes.
Purity of heart, what, 303. Its neceſſity from ſcripture, 304. Its bleſſedneſs here and hereafter, 306. Means to attain it, 307.

Q

Qualifications of miniſters 114, &c.
Qualifications neceſſary to prayer, 320, &c.
Quickening, the work of the Spirit, 154.

R

Recreation, the uſe and abuſe of them, 465.
Regenerate and unregenerate, the difference between them, 478.
Regeneration, what, and the nature of it 475. The neceſſity of it to future happineſs 477.
Regeneration, the meaning of the word in Matthew xix. 28, 184.
Religion, our chief concern, and the happy conſequences of making it ſo, 414. The comforts of it 488.
Reſtitution, the difficulty, and yet the neceſſity of it 358.
Reſurrection of Chriſt, the nature of its proof, 1, &c. An objection againſt it taken from his not appearing to all the people, anſwered, 9, 10. The manner of it 12. It is a vindication of his perſon and performances 13. A proof of his religion 14. A pledge of our own reſurrection 16. An obligation to virtue and godlineſs 17. And to heavenly-mindedneſs 311.
Reſurrection of the dead, the time of mens final retribution 184. What notion the heathens had of it 193, 194. Notes. How clearly it is revealed in the goſpel 196. An objection againſt it anſwered 197. The certainty of it proved from the power of God 198. And from other arguments 199. The propriety of the reſurrection 201, &c. The manner of it 206. The uſes of the doctrine 208.

Riches, their uncertainty and emptineſs, 382.
Righteouſneſs, what, and what it is to hunger and thirſt after it, 486. The bleſſing and reward of ſo doing; 1ſt. The acquiſition of righteouſneſs 487. 2dly. Comfort and ſatisfaction here, eſpecially at the hour of death 488. 3dly. Eternal happineſs hereafter 489.
Rights of men, natural and acquired 353.
Rites, the power of church governors in relation to them 130.

S

Sacraments, to adminiſter them, the office of Chriſt's miniſters 122.
Sanctification, the work of the Spirit, 154.
Satisfaction, in what ſenſe the fathers uſed that word 473.
Scriptures, we ſhould meditate on them 417. The great ſin of drollery upon them 452.
Self-denial, what, in our Saviour's ſenſe 470. The neceſſity of it, both in a ſettled and in a penitential ſtate 472. Practiſed by the beſt heathens, and remarkably by the primitive chriſtians 474.
Seneca, his rule about contentment 445.
Separate ſouls, the diſtinction that may be made between them 187. The place of no ſignification to their happineſs or miſery 188.
Seſſion of Chriſt at God's right-hand, the meaning of it, 31. The truth of it 32. What is to be obſerved from thence 33.
Sick perſons, duties towards them 400.
Sin, a hindrance in our delighting in God, 288. Meditation or ſerious conſideration, a means of preſerving and recovering us from it 218.
Soul of man, in what ſenſe it is immortal 169. Its immortality proved 170, &c. Whether the Jews had right notions of its ſeparate ſtate 179. The chriſtian doctrine in that particular 180. That its happineſs or miſery in that ſtate is imperfect 181.
Spirit of God, his ordinary gifts and operations 148, &c. How thoughts infuſed by him may be termed diſferent kinds of grace 161. How to know whether we have the Spirit, and how to improve it 167. How to acquire it 168.
Stoicks, their notion of mercy 193. What they thought of the paſſions 427. How they uſe the word regeneration 475. Notes.
Subjects, their duty to their governors, to aid and aſſiſt them, and to honour and eſteem them, 361. Not to cenſure or revile them, but to pray for them 363.
Submiſſion to the will of God, twofold, 300.
Sun, whether it is the place of hell, 258.
Sympathy implanted in man's nature, 388.

T

Temptations to ſin, how to be avoided, 441.
Teſtimony, conditions of a proper one 2. Applied to the apoſtles 3.
Thomas, the apoſtle, his unbelief, and the nature of it, 18. The aggravations of it, 20. The reaſon of God's permitting it, 21.
Thoughts, an account to be given of them, 218. What power we have over them, 410. Wherein the morality of them conſiſts, 411. We are to govern them, by attending to them at firſt, 413. By avoiding idleneſs and bad company, 413, 414. By making religion our chief concern, 414. By living under a ſenſe of God's preſence, 415. Exerciſes proper for this purpoſe, ibid.
Threatenings againſt ſinners, that God is obliged to make them good in the future ſtate, 268.
Tongue, the difficulty of governing it, 449. Whence this difficulty ariſes, ibid. The government of it with reſpect to God, 451. With reſpect

respect to our neighbours, 452. With respect to ourselves, 458. Motives to the good government of it, 462.
Tophet, whence it came to be a representation of hell, 254. Notes.

V

Virtue, the only proper foundation for friendship, 376. Meditation a means of exciting us to it, 421.
Virtue and vice, the natural distinction between them, 275. They may often put on the appearance of each other, 484.
Visiting the sick, a duty, 400.
Usury forbid among the Jews, and why, 407. Not unlawful in itself, ibid. But must not be taken of the poor, 408.

W

Wickedness, the dreadfulness of their punishment hereafter, 258. Their misery here, 394, 429.
Wife, her duty in common with her husband, 366, &c. Her peculiar duties, 369. The husband's peculiar duty towards her, 370, &c.
Will of God, submission to it, twofold, 400.
Words, an account to be given of them, 219.
Works, in what sense men are rewarded according to them, 251.
Works of God, a proper object of our meditation, 417.
World, the tradition of its lasting six thousand years, 23. The final conflagration of it, 229.
Worship, public, the reasonableness of it, 325, 331.

Z

Zeal, how to be regulated, 484.

BRITISH MUSEUM 11 SE 73

A TABLE

A TABLE of Paſſages of Scripture explained, or more eſpecially referred to in this Volume.

GENESIS.

Chap.	Verſe.	Page.
3	15	37
49	10	ib.

EXODUS.

22	21	407

LEVITICUS.

19	17	398
25	35, &c.	407
25	39, 43	375

NUMBERS.

6	22	326
12	3	435
24	17	37

DEUTERONOMY.

6	4, 5	277
13	6, &c.	221
15	7, 10	403
18	15, 18	37
21	7, 8	327
22	1, 4	398
23	19, 20	407
24	14	373
30	11, &c.	357

II. SAMUEL.

16	10, 11	350

JOB.

2	10	432
5	6, 7	300, 301
6	4	290
15	15, 16	290
19	25, &c.	195
31	15	402
34	19	384

PSALMS.

16	8	393
16	11	489
17	15	ib.
24	3, 4	307
37	11, 16	437
41	1	409
42	1, 2	323
50	14	331
80	8, &c.	76
101	2, 3, &c.	361
112	9	403
116	11, &c.	331
119	59	420
145	15	417
147	1	333

PROVERBS.

2	3, &c.	487
11	17	402
15	11	416
16	5	422
17	17	376
18	24	ib.
27	5, 6	380
27	9, &c.	381

ECCLESIASTES.

2	2	452
5	18, 19	460
6	1, 2	465

TEXTS EXPLAINED.

ISAIAH.

Chap.	Verse	Page.
26	19	196
44	3	70
53	9	48
66	21	62

JEREMIAH.

3	14, &c.	67
7	22, 23	63
28	8, 9	44

LAMENTATIONS.

1	12	448
3	33	302

EZEKIEL.

18	7, &c.	408
34	2, &c.	129
36	26, 27	149

DANIEL.

3	16	293
7	13, &c.	38

JOEL.

2	28	70

MICAH.

7	9	301

MALACHI.

2	10	344

MATTHEW.

5	3	423
5	5	437
16	21, &c.	470

MARK.

Chap.	Verse	Page.
9	48, 40	255
13	32	234

LUKE.

6	36	390
12	15	442
24	34	464

JOHN.

5	31	55
10	37	ib.
18	36	93
21	25	58

ACTS.

7	59	173
13	32, 33	27
17	18, 32	194
20	28, &c.	129
23	1, &c.	362
26	2, 6	192

ROMANS.

2	1	455
3	31	68
12	20, 21	351
13	6, 7	361
14	10	456
14	12, 13	454

I. CORINTHIANS.

1	10	96
2	4	119

II. CORINTHIANS.

1	12	453
5	10	209
7	11	472

Chap.

Chap.	Verse	Page.
11	23	447
12	2, 3, 4	182

GALATIANS.

3	13	27
6	6	364

EPHESIANS.

2	5, &c.	34
4	10	31

PHILIPPIANS.

1	23, 24	181
4	11, &c.	440

COLOSSIANS.

2	8	82
3	19	370
3	22	375
3	24	376
4	1	372

THESSALONIANS.

4	3, &c.	304
4	15	138
5	23	173

I. THESSALONIANS.

2	1, &c.	238

I. TIMOTHY.

2	12	370

II. TIMOTHY.

2	12	473
2	24, &c.	393

TITUS.

Chap.	Verse	Page.
1	7, &c.	114
2	7, 8	480

HEBREWS.

11	37, 38	212
12	14	477

JAMES.

1	2	439

I. PETER.

3	7	371

II. PETER.

3	10, 17	226

I. JOHN.

3	2	241
4	17	282
4	21	344

JUDE.

	8	138

REVELATION.

1	20	104
6	11	192
7	15, &c.	489
21	27	477

FINIS.

BRITISH
11 SE 73
MUSEUM